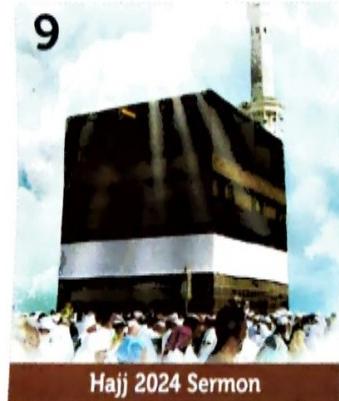


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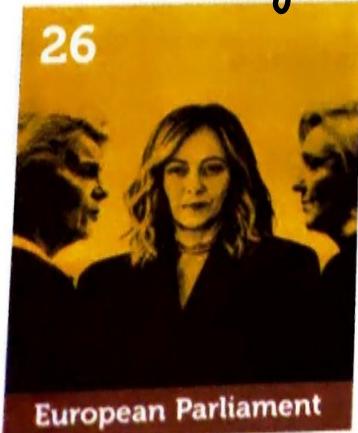


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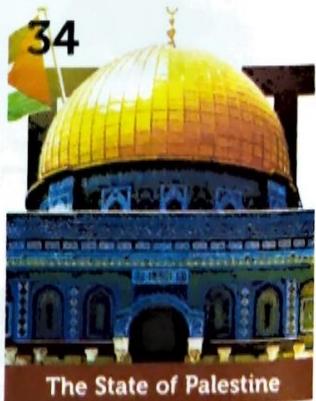


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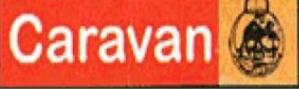
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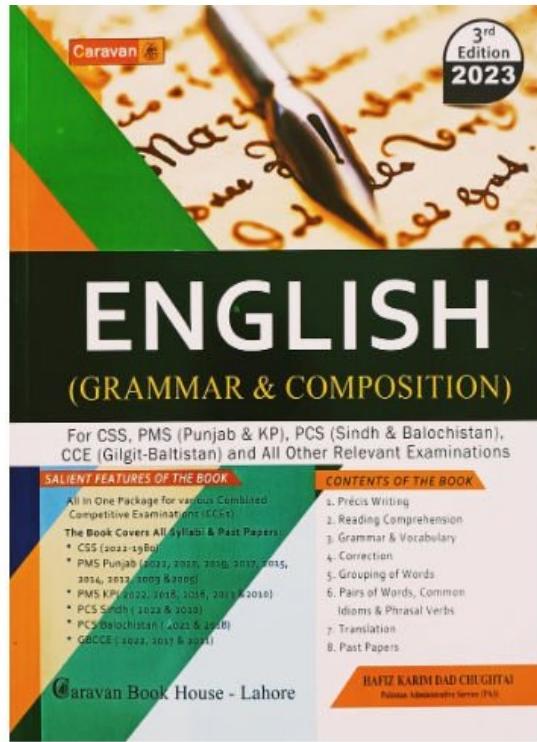
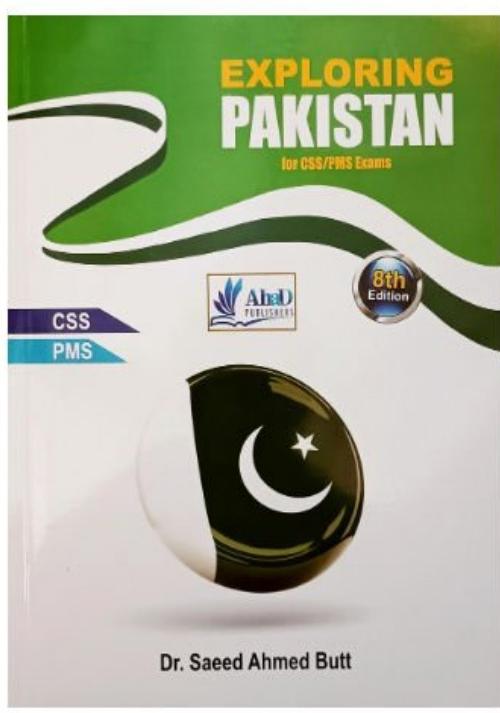
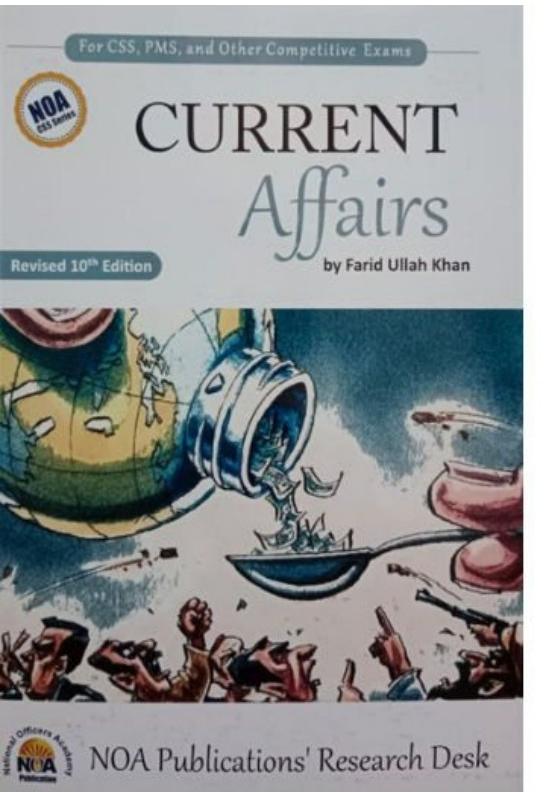
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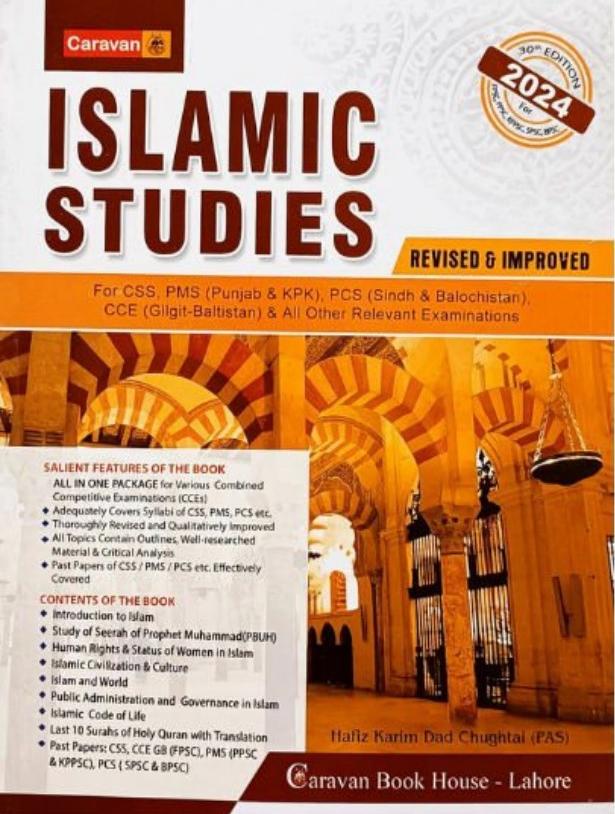
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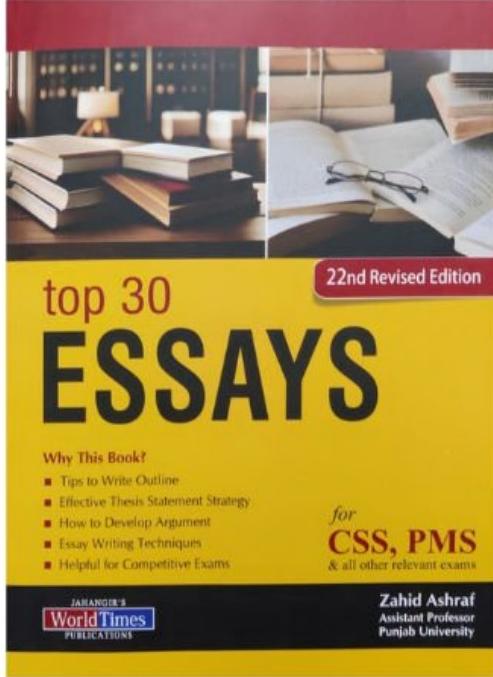
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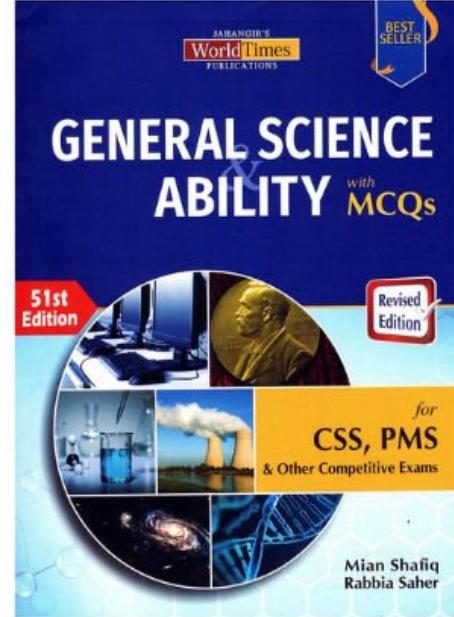
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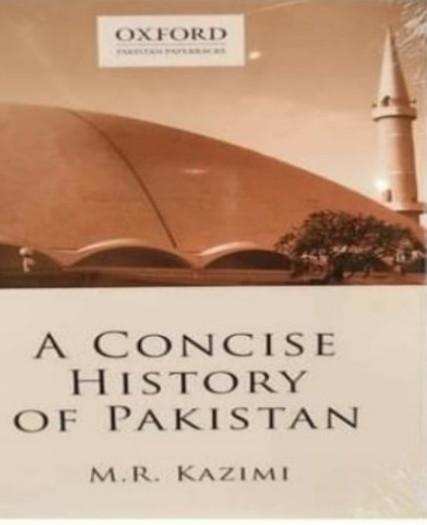
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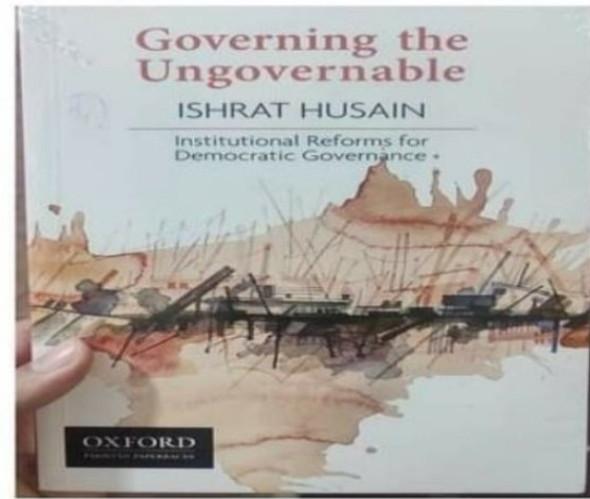
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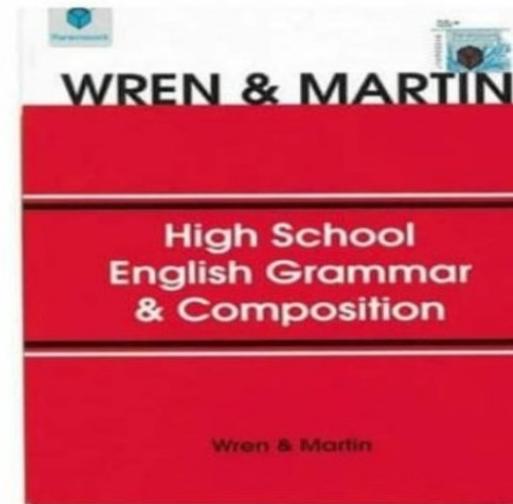
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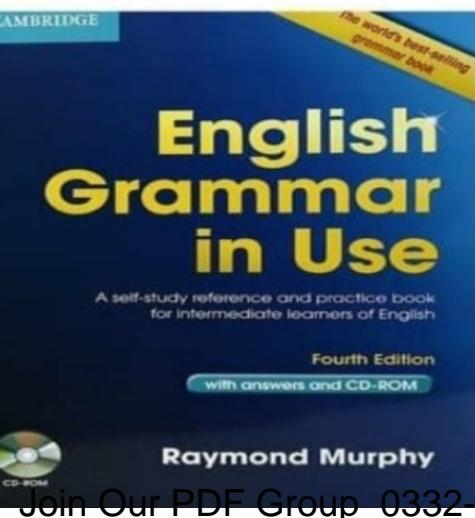
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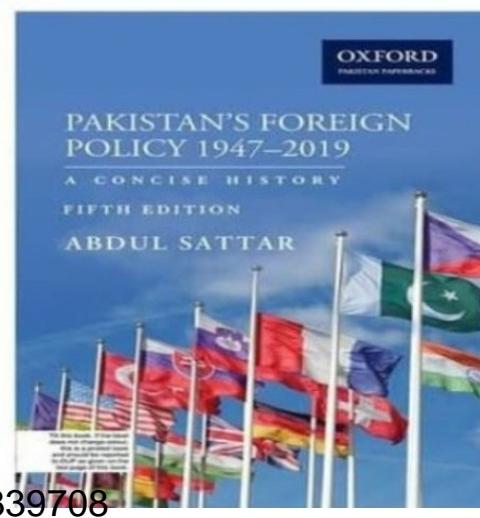
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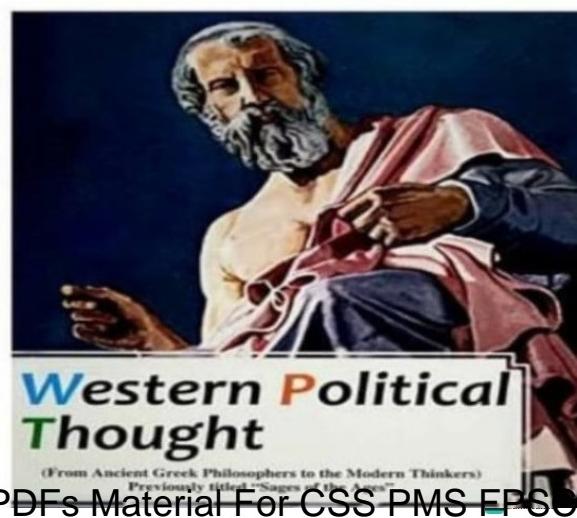
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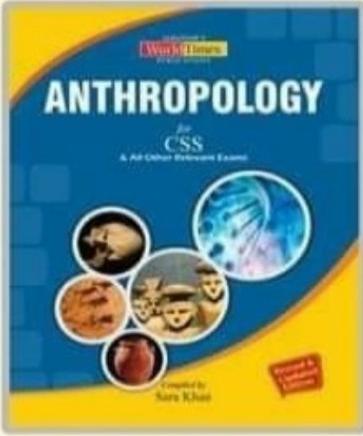
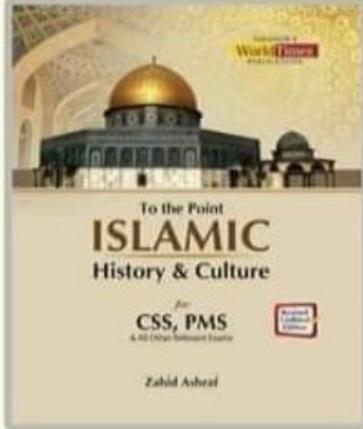
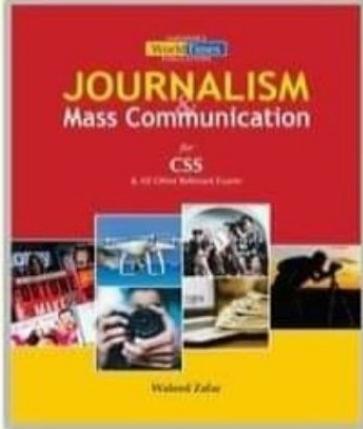
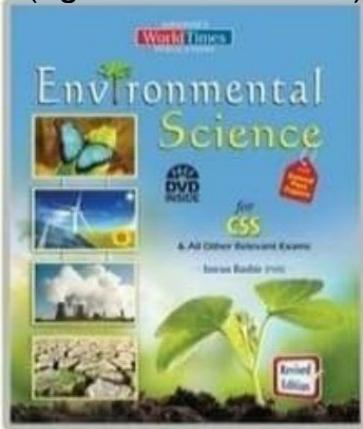
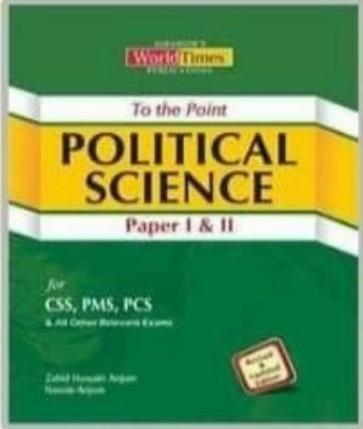
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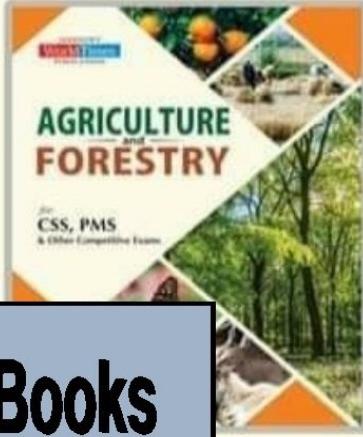
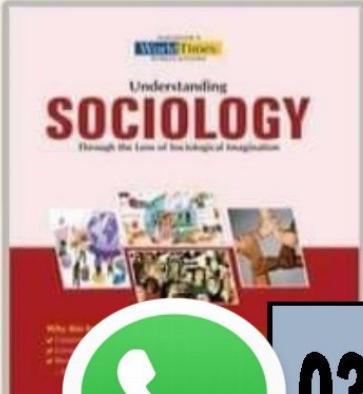
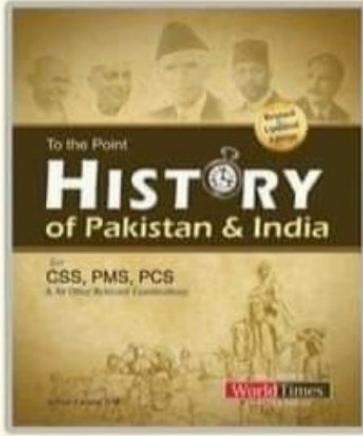
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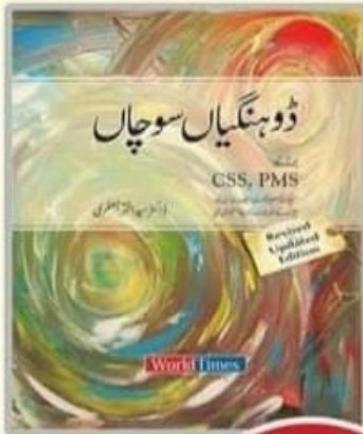
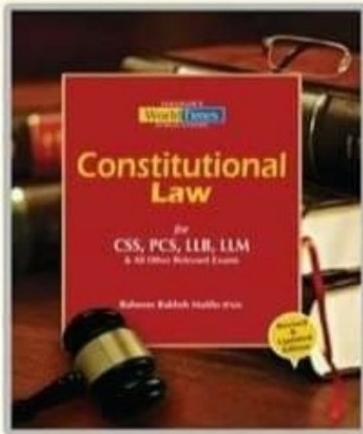
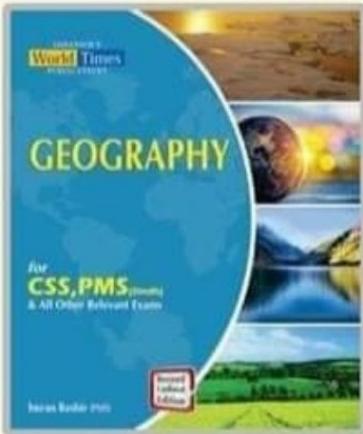
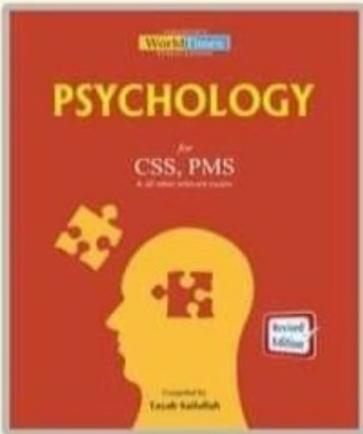
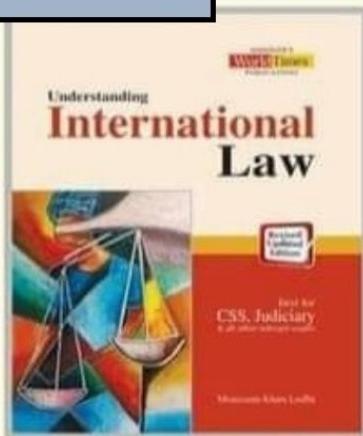
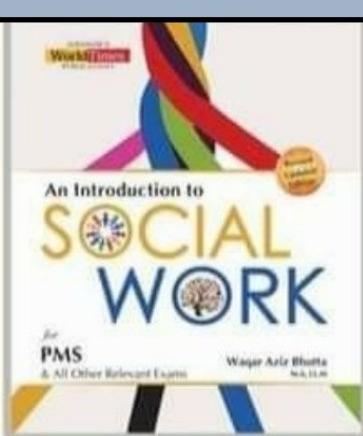
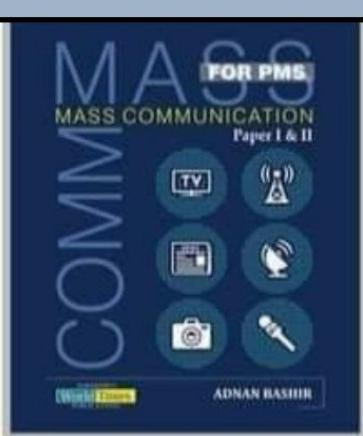
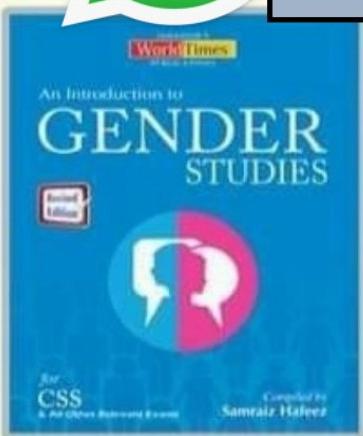
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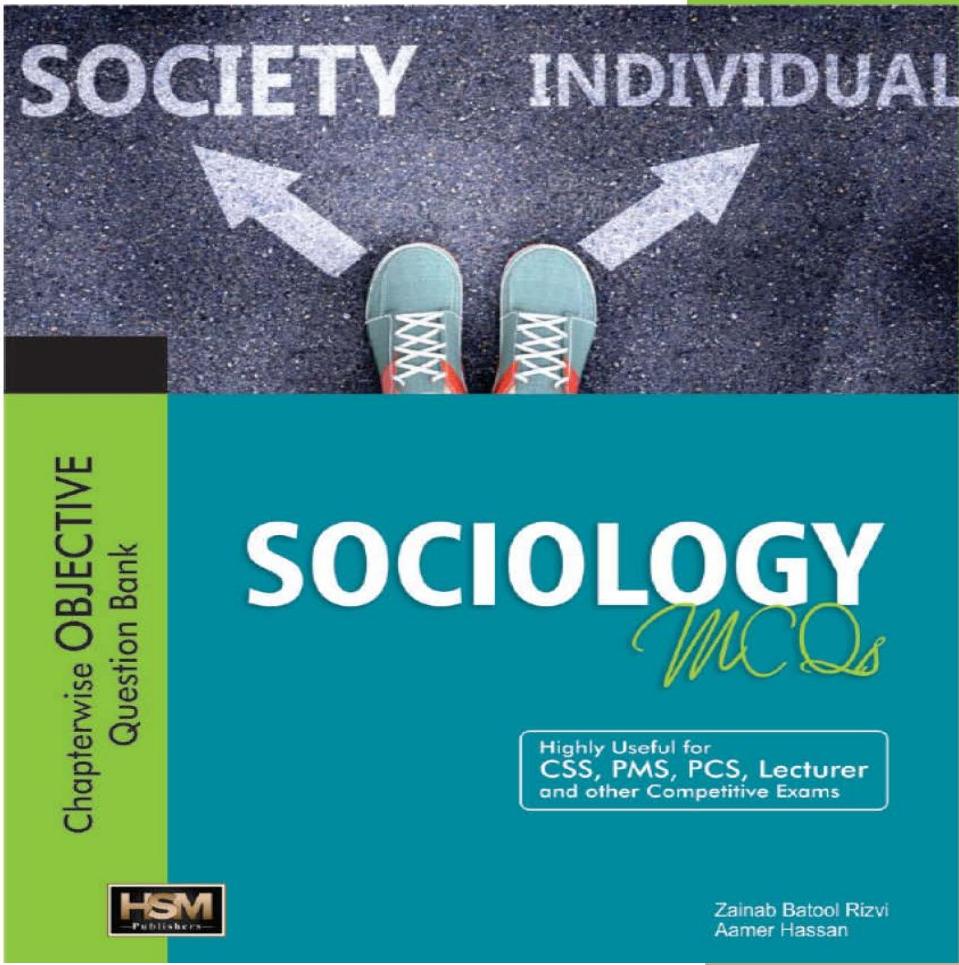
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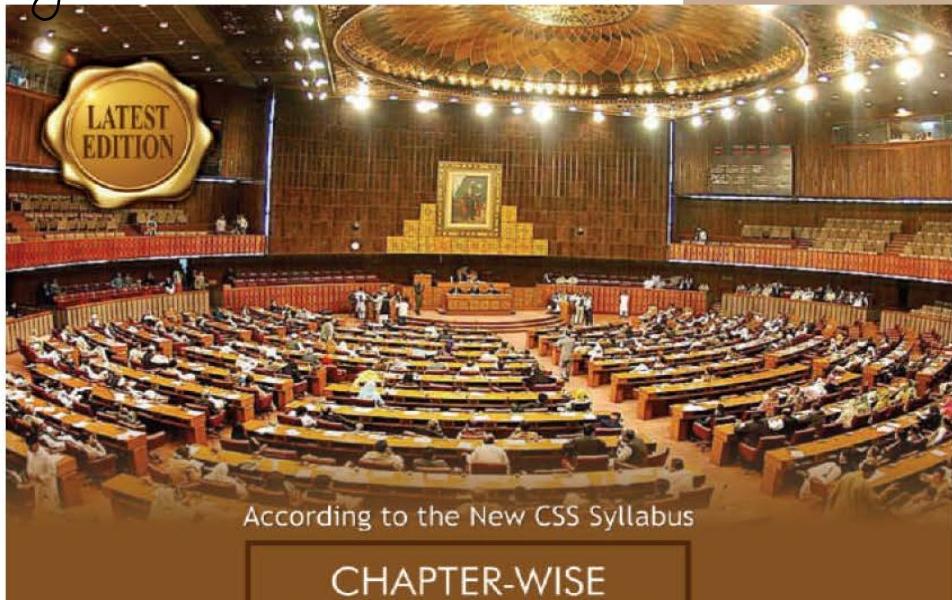
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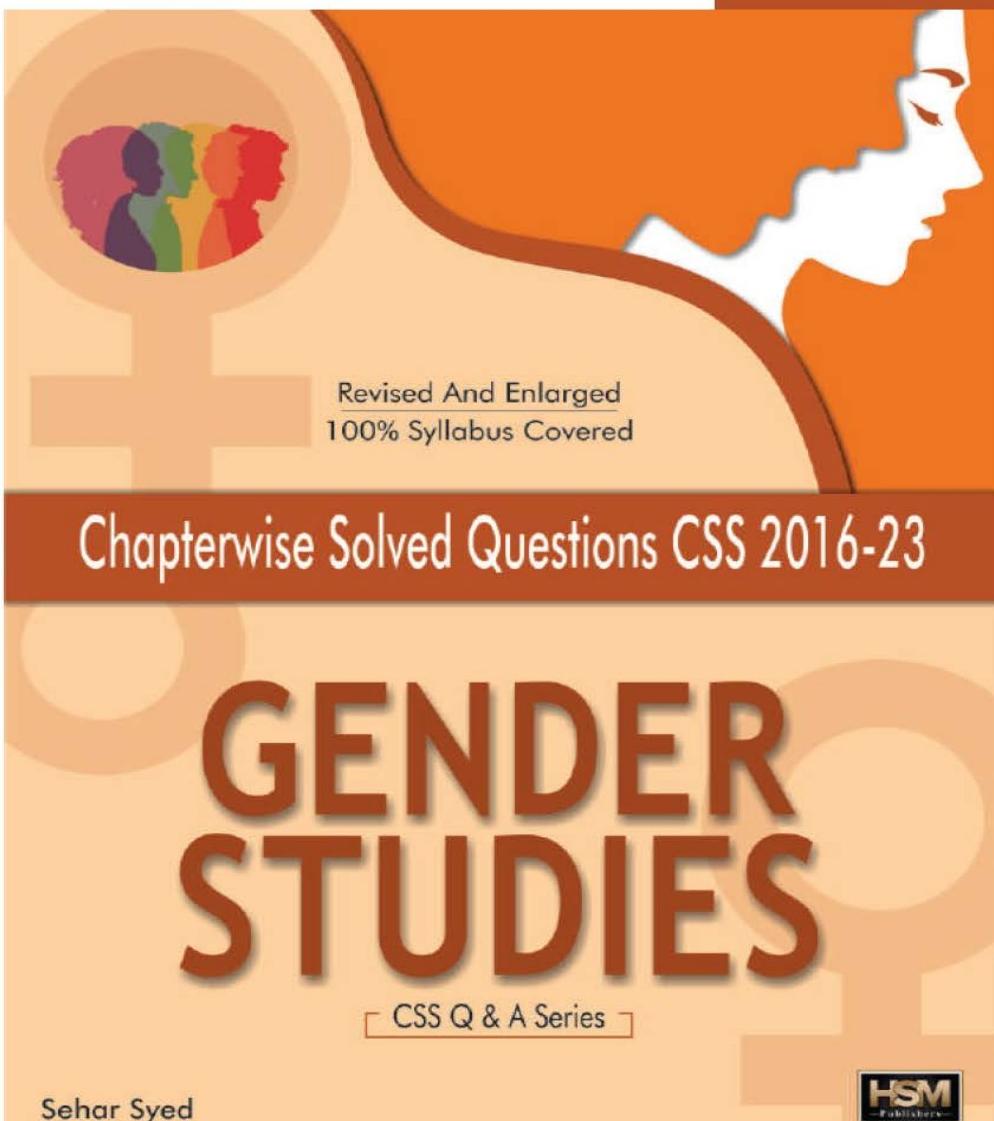
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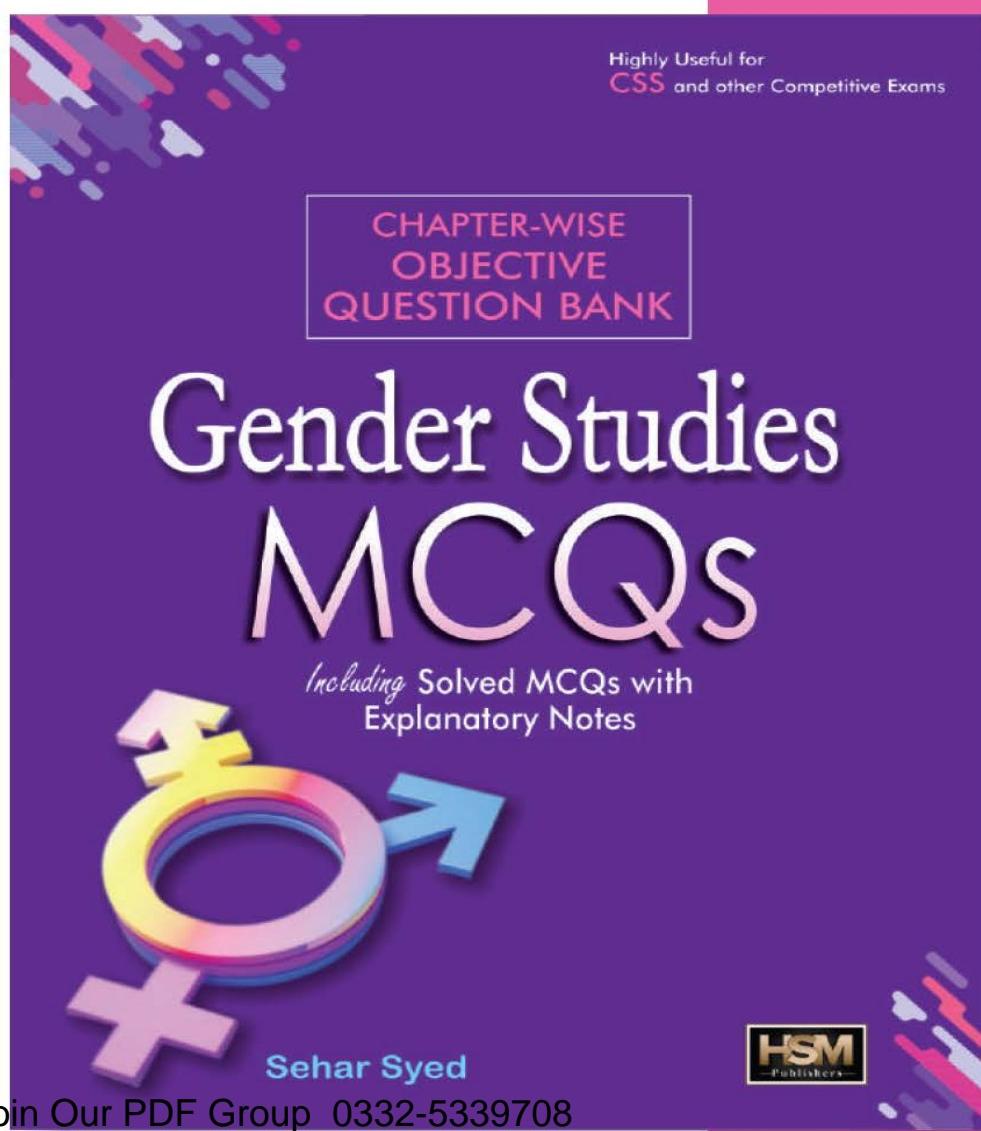


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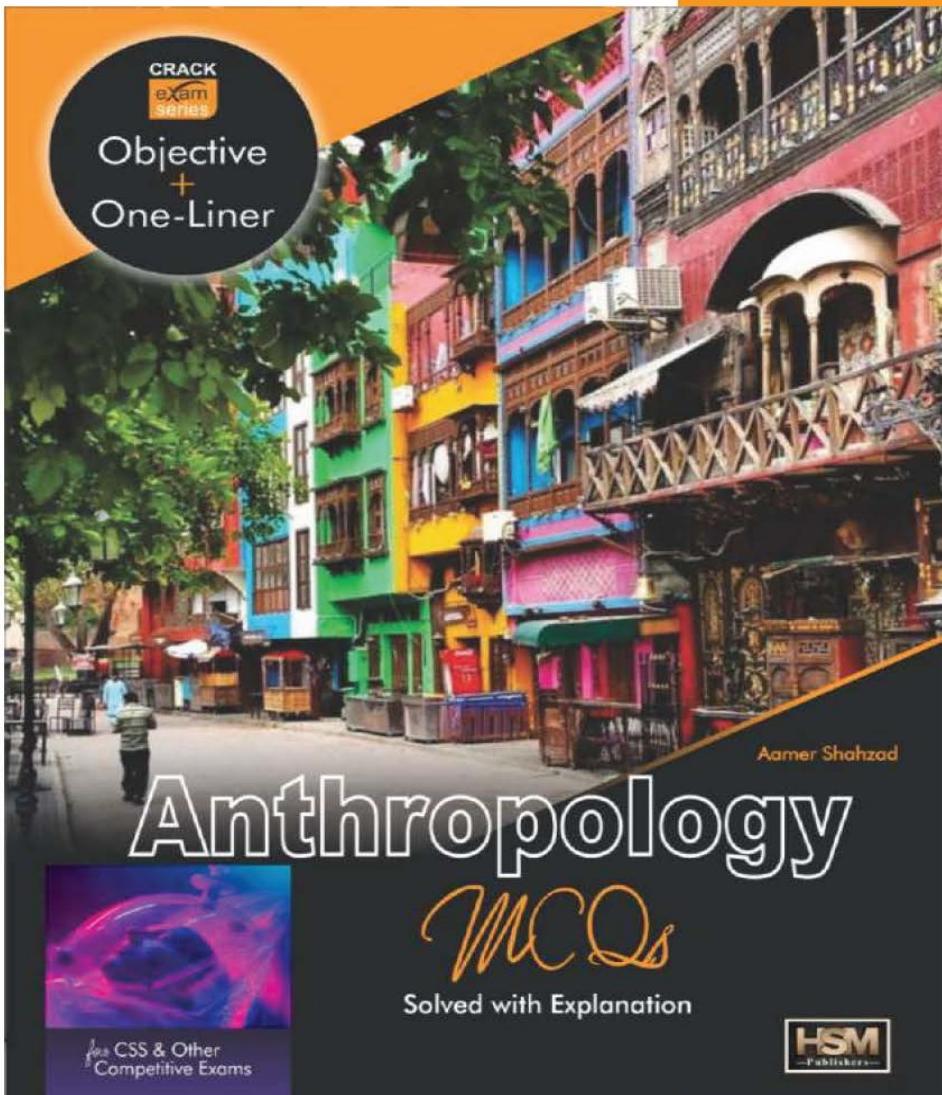
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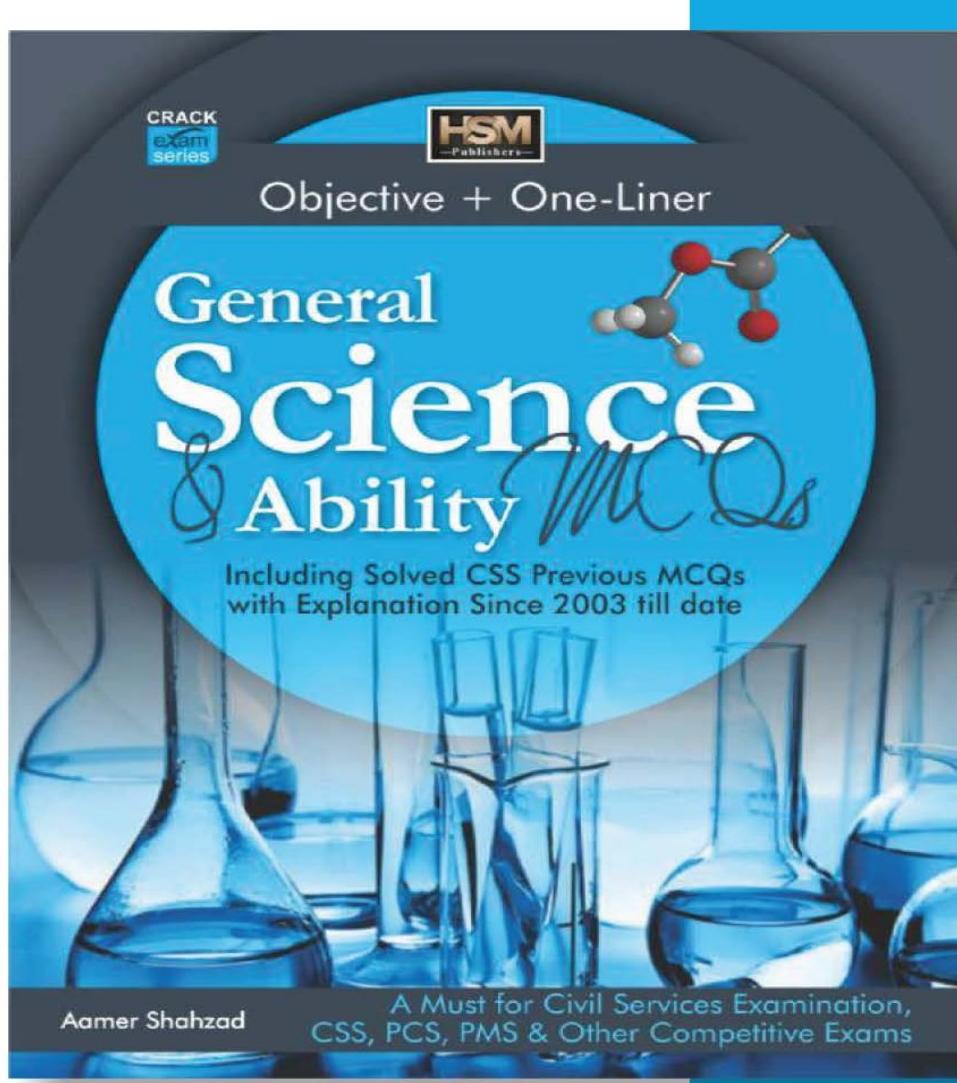
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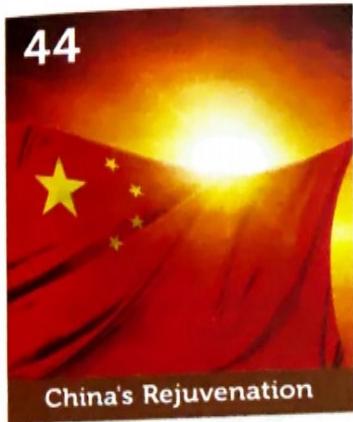


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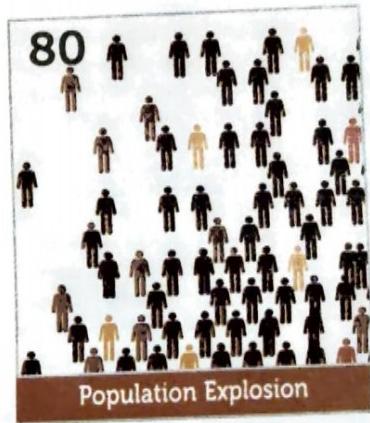


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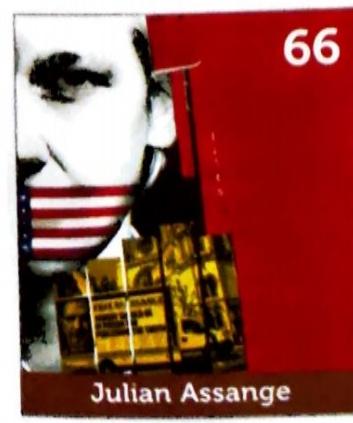
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# LETTER to the EDITOR

## A Moral Defeat

The outcome of the Indian election is rightly called as a moral defeat for a leader who built his narrative around Hindutva ideology seeking to establish the hegemony of Hindus and Hinduism within India. Contrary to expectations, despite winning a third term in government, Narendra Modi's BJP has witnessed a strong and unexpected resurgence from its subdued opponents and it evidently proves that the Hindutva saffron flag, after a decade of ruling over India, is losing its luster. No doubt, the reduced parliamentary strength means the Modi will not have a smooth sailing as he had wished because a numerically strengthened opposition riding on high morale will press its advantage at every turn. It further means the RSS-BJP master plan for the South Asia is now firmly stuck in a rut. While Hindu nationalists crawl back into party offices to lick its wounds, India's minorities – especially its 200 million strong Muslim population – will be breathing a sigh of relief. Although it is likely that Modi will return to his policy of religious communalism and oppression with a vengeance, small details in the election results are proving that India may just be starting to buck Modi's ultranationalist yoke, and beginning to aspire towards the pacifist, pluralistic, multiethnic and syncretic nature of its historical existence.

Sadia Abbasi, Mirpur, AJK

## India-Pakistan Relations

Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism, enduring devastating attacks that have left thousands dead and countless others affected. The nation has repeatedly presented concrete evidence of external involvement in these terrorist activities, implicating India in several instances. Notable examples include the Lahore terrorist incident and the recent revelations of Indian involvement in the assassination of two Pakistani citizens. It is not only Pakistan but other nations are also making similar assertions against the country which is pursuing Hindutva ideology under Modi. The Canadian leadership has accused India of the assassination of a Sikh leader on their soil. Similarly, an attempt to kill another Sikh leader in the United States has further exposed India's activities beyond its borders. Such actions challenge India's narrative of being a victim of terrorism and point to its role as a perpetrator of such acts. Pakistan has always shown a willingness to engage in dialogue with India on all pertinent issues, including terrorism. Constructive dialogue is the most viable path to resolving such deep-rooted issues. However, for dialogue to be effective, it must occur in a conducive environment. This greater responsibility lies significantly with India which needs to reverse its unilateral and illegal actions in the illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The creation of a stable and peaceful South Asia is in the interest of both the countries and the broader international community.

Ayesha Rizvi, Jhang

## Solarization in Pakistan

The rooftop solar penetration is increasing at a rapid pace due to falling prices for solar plates as well as equipment as grid power tariffs rise. It's a good problem to have and should be resolved amicably without creating unnecessary controversies. In the last decade, globally, many countries pushed for solar penetration by offering incentives and subsidies; and now with growing penetration, to fund the additional cost on a grid to manage high variable supply and other stranded costs, they are rolling back the promoted policies and devising new strategies. Pakistan should do the same. We have a long way to go. Even at accelerated pace of solarization, it would take another 3-4 years from combined solar and wind to reach 10 percent of capacity. However, that doesn't mean that the utility companies should relax and wait for the crisis to come. They must start planning at investment and policy level today to take the growing variable load without any hiccups. The government must have a balanced policy to encourage solar penetration whilst not compromising the power transmission and distribution business.

Kamran Alvi, Karachi

## Pakistan Joins UNSC

Pakistan's election to the non-permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council for an eighth term by an overwhelming majority is a milestone for the country's diplomacy on the international stage. Pakistan has arrived in the UNSC with the world in turmoil. Palestine, Ukraine, Taiwan and sub-Saharan Africa are in a state of open hostility, all part of the same geopolitical tussle between multipolarity and unipolarity. The West is barreling towards a globe-spanning conflict and seems to have lost the ability to slow down in any meaningful way. Israel's brutal genocide, backed to the hilt by the West, has driven a stake through the global community, dividing it into irreconcilable camps. The UNSC cannot solve all of this, and Pakistan, as a non-permanent member not holding a veto, certainly cannot solve all of this. However, it can still be a strong and important voice—being an advocate for the oppressed and bringing attention to long-forgotten issues, such as Indian Occupied Kashmir.

Sajid Hussain Jatoi, Hyderabad

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### A look at key messages

This year's Day of Arafat was marked by a profound sermon delivered by the Imam of the Grand Mosque of Makkah, Sheikh Maher Bin Hamad Al Muaiqly, as millions of pilgrims gathered on the plains of Arafat on June 15, emphasising the fundamental principles of Islam. The sermon commenced with praises to Allah, extolling His attributes as the Most Wise, Most Aware, Most Knowledgeable, and Most Capable. The Imam highlighted Allah's absolute sovereignty over the universe, drawing from Quranic verses that illustrate His omnipotence and the creation's submission to His command.

Quoting the Quran, he said, "He promptly covers the light of the day with the darkness of the night and has subjected the sun, the moon and the stars to His command. To Him alone belong all creation and command. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of all creation." [7:54]

Underscoring the Quran's role as a guiding mercy for humanity, he highlighted its capacity to rectify conduct and lead toward righteousness. He cited the Quranic verse 17:9, affirming, "Indeed, this Qur'an guides to what is most upright, and gives glad tidings to the People of Iman who perform righteous deeds, that for them alone will be a great reward."

Following are some key points of this year's sermon:

#### 1. Sharīah's Objectives

The Sharīah aims to achieve and maximize benefits while preventing or minimizing harm. It prioritizes preventing harm over achieving benefits.

#### 2. Flourishing Life

The Sharīah encompasses everything that promotes a flourishing life and development, and it prohibits causing harm to others.

#### 3. Five Essentials

Islamic law emphasizes the importance of preserving the five essentials: religion, life, intellect, wealth and honor. Any violation against them is considered a crime.

#### 4. Individual Responsibility

Every believer must strive to protect these five essentials, which leads to the well-being of creation, societal stability, widespread security and the ability for people to achieve their religious and worldly interests.

#### 5. Purpose of Hajj

Hajj is a manifestation of worship and devotion to Allah, not a place for political slogans or factions.

#### 6. Greatness of Arafah

Pilgrims, you are in a significant position at Arafah, where Allah boasts of you to His angels. It is a noble time and place where good deeds are multiplied, sins are forgiven and ranks are elevated.

#### 7. Prophet's Practice

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stood at Arafah to engage in remembrance and supplication.

#### 8. Supplication

Pilgrims should pray for themselves, their parents and

their loved ones. When one prays for their brothers in their absence, an angel responds, "Amen, and for you the same."

#### 9. Prayers for Palestine

Pray for our brothers in Palestine who are suffering from harm and oppression by their enemy, shedding blood, causing destruction and preventing them from accessing their needs.

#### 10. Other Important Points

- Monotheism is the foundation of religion. Do not associate partners with Allah. No one is worthy of worship except Allah.
- We should follow the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last prophet.
- Allah has repeatedly commanded us to perform prayers in the Quran. Prayer is the greatest remembrance of Allah.
- I warn young people against sins committed in solitude. Such sins destroy worship and piety.
- People should always follow the path of goodness, as the foundation of Islam is goodness.
- The spread of indecency is destroying societies. Muslims should pay special attention to modesty and promote it.
- A person with good character will succeed in this world and receive great rewards in the hereafter.
- A Muslim is a protector of trusts. Islam places great importance on maintaining kinship ties.
- Every Muslim should always respect the dignity of others.
- Muslims should unite.
- Those who usurp others' wealth will end up in Hell.
- I pray for the Muslims of Palestine who are enduring great oppression. O Allah, grant freedom to the people of Palestine from the Jews. Everyone should pray for the end of the hardships faced by the people of Palestine.

"The combination of the testimony that only Allah is to be worshipped, along with the testimony that Muhammad (PBUH) is Allah's messenger."

"Muslims should exhibit best of the manners as only those who will have good manners will be close to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) on the day of judgment"

"Remember the Palestinians in prayers, Allah Almighty forgives sins and raises the ranks"

"Islam forbids betrayal of trust, Obey Allah and his Messenger (PBUH)"

"Muslims to keep praying and paying zakat to the needy people."

"Give zakat, take care of the rights of every human being"

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## The Demise of Petrodollar?

Saudi Arabia ditches the 50-year petrodollar agreement

Magazine Desk

**T**he financial world is bracing for a significant upheaval as Saudi Arabia, a pivotal player in global oil markets, has decided not to renew its Petrodollar deal with the United States. The termination of the 50-year Petrodollar agreement, which reportedly expired on June 9, 2024, has raised eyebrows worldwide. This development signifies a major shift away from the Petrodollar system established in 1972, when the US decoupled its currency from gold, and is anticipated to hasten the global shift away from the US dollar.

### What is Petrodollar?

- The term "Petrodollar" refers to the US dollar's role as the currency used for crude oil transactions on the world market.
- The Petrodollar is any US dollar paid to oil-exporting countries in exchange.
- The 1944 Bretton Woods conference established the US dollar as the world's reserve currency, as after World War II, the United States held most of the world's supply of gold.
- The US dollar is pegged to gold and all other currencies are pegged to the dollar.
- The Petrodollar arrangement has its roots in the 1970s when the United States and Saudi Arabia struck a deal shortly after the US went off the gold standard that would go on to have

**The US-Saudi Arabia 50-year Petrodollar agreement, inked half a century ago in 1974 under the leadership of President Nixon and King Faisal, expired on 9th June 2024 as the latter declined to renew it. This crucial decision has enabled Saudi Arabia to sell oil and other goods in multiple currencies, including the Chinese RMB, euro, yen and yuan, instead of exclusively in US dollars. Additionally, the potential use of digital currencies like Bitcoin may also be considered.**

far-reaching consequences for the global economy.

- Then President Nixon removed the dollar from the gold standard to protect the remaining US gold reserves.
- This gave rise to the concept of Petrodollar Recycling.
- In 1973, by US-Saudi deal, Saudi Arabia (the largest supplier of oil) agreed to use US dollars for oil contracts.
- The US dollars would be recycled back to America through contracts with US companies.
- Thus, the whole US foreign policy vis-à-vis West Asia envisaged maintaining the dominance of Petrodollar.

**INTERNATIONAL**

- That's why the US seeks to have a say in the supply of oil.
- In the history of global finance, few agreements have wielded as many benefits as the Petrodollar pact did for the US economy.

**US-Saudi Petrodollar deal**

**Background** Buy Books Online 0332-5339708

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was founded in 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela to coordinate petroleum policies and stabilize oil markets. However, its role in the oil market remained peripheral at best. By the early 1970s, global oil consumption had more than doubled, outpacing supply, and the US had lost its spare production capacity.

In 1971, the US abandoned the Bretton Woods Accord and the gold standard, leading to dollar instability and depreciated oil revenues for OPEC. In 1973, the Yom Kippur War prompted Arab OPEC members to impose an oil embargo on the US and its allies, causing oil prices to quadruple and leading to global economic turmoil. This crisis set the stage for the 1974 Petrodollar agreement between the US and Saudi Arabia.

**The deal**

During a critical diplomatic exchange between President Roosevelt and King Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Petrodollar system was formalized to ensure Saudi oil transactions were exclusively conducted in US dollars. This arrangement bolstered the dollar's prominence in global trade and finance, cementing America's economic influence.

Historically, the Petrodollar emerged amidst geopolitical maneuvers, including Henry Kissinger's strategic efforts during the Yom Kippur War to leverage oil as a tool of diplomacy. This move not only stabilized American currency but also reshaped international alliances, particularly in the Middle East.

**Implications of the Petrodollar System****Elevation of the US Dollar**

The Petrodollar system significantly elevated the US dollar's status as the dominant global reserve currency. Continuous demand for dollars allowed the US to run trade deficits without facing the usual

negative consequences and enabled borrowing at lower costs to finance budget deficits. Oil-exporting countries accumulated large surpluses of US dollars, reinvesting them in US assets, reinforcing the dollar's dominance.

**Geopolitical and Economic Impact**

The Petrodollar deal was a key factor behind the US's economic dominance and high standard of living. It forged strong strategic alliances, particularly with Saudi Arabia, and maintained US influence over global oil prices. The arrangement provided the US with economic advantages, such as lower borrowing costs and a robust financial system.

**Expiration and potential impact****Weakening of the US Dollar's Status**

Saudi Arabia's decision not to renew the Petrodollar deal allows it to sell oil in other currencies, such as the Chinese yuan, euro and yen. This represents a major shift away from the Petrodollar system and could accelerate the global move away from the US dollar, leading to a more multipolar currency system, not excluding cryptocurrencies.

**Impact on the US Economy and Financial Markets**

The end of the Petrodollar system could result in a decline in global demand for the US dollar, potentially leading to higher inflation, higher interest rates and a weaker bond market. The US economy may face challenges in financing deficits cheaply, and the strain on the

banking system, national deficit and federal budget could increase.

**Potential Implications for International Oil Prices**

The end of the Petrodollar system could lead to increased oil price volatility as the market adjusts to a new global financial order. Saudi Arabia's decision to sell oil in other currencies represents a significant shift, potentially reducing global demand for the US dollar. In the near term, OPEC+'s new deal, which allows incremental increases in oil output starting from October 2024, could result in a modest decrease in oil prices and an easing of global inflation. The long-term impact will depend on global economic dynamics, including the rise of alternative currencies, renewable energy growth, new oil-producing nations



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and geopolitical shifts.

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### Relevance to Saudi Vision 2030

Saudi Vision 2030 is the real manifestation of ushering in a new era of diversified economy, marking a shift from orthodox reliance on Petrodollar to converting the Kingdom into a trade hub for Europe, Africa and Asia. Since the launch of Vision 2030 in 2016, KSA, under the dynamic leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, is making strides in creating a new outlook of the KSA which is based upon three main pillars: building a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation.

The KSA aims to achieve the first pillar by boosting religious tourism by increasing Umrah visitors from eight million to a staggering 30 million annually, showcasing Islamic history by building the world's largest Islamic museum, building world-class cities by developing Saudi cities to have three ranked among the top 100 globally and promoting the growth of cultural and entertainment opportunities alongside encouraging healthy lifestyle among its citizens.

To bolster its economy, KSA plans to reduce reliance on oil through privatization and by fostering new industries like tourism, renewable energy and manufacturing while modernizing education to have five top-ranked universities by 2030. It also aims to support small businesses to create jobs and boost their contribution to the economy.

Saudi Arabia plans to realize its third pillar by working for a clean governance system. This includes zero tolerance for corruption, increased transparency through online services and 500,000 better-trained government employees via the King Salman Program.

### Options for Pakistan

While Saudi Vision 2030 prioritizes domestic development, it's also a boon for Pakistan. Due to its strategic location, skilled workforce and untapped potential, Pakistan stands to benefit greatly as Saudi Arabia seeks partners for its journey to become a global investment hub.

Owing to this, KSA has announced to invest 20 billion dollars in Pakistan. Pakistan has, in turn, offered 25 different projects for billion-dollar investments like PIA, privatization of airports, Bhasha Dam, Rahim Yar Khan and Ghazi Brotha dams, Faisalabad transmission lines, etc. Considering the financial strain Pakistan is currently facing, the economic revival is a major challenge for the current government. Therefore, the Pakistan government is endeavouring hard to provide a conducive environment for investment through a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The investment by KSA will not only pave the way for steering the country out of the economic crisis but will



also prove to be a catalyst for foreign direct investment.

This journey of economic empowerment is the need of the hour for both countries, especially Pakistan. KSA is the economic power of the Middle East, whereas Pakistan is a military power; therefore, mutual cooperation between the two countries will open new avenues in the sectors of economy and defence.

### Conclusion

Saudi Arabia's recent actions suggest a departure from its long-standing commitment to the petrodollar. At the 2023 World Economic Forum, Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan hinted at the kingdom's readiness to explore alternative trade settlement currencies, including the Chinese yuan. This statement, coupled with Saudi Arabia's reduced dollar reserves and its membership in the BRICS club, signifies a broader shift towards diversifying its economic ties beyond traditional Western alliances. Moreover, the global financial sphere is witnessing a gradual decline in the dollar's share in global reserves, prompting discussions about alternative reserve currencies. Bitcoin, with its decentralized nature and global acceptance, emerges as a candidate to potentially fill this vacuum, offering a stateless alternative to government-controlled currencies. As Saudi Arabia adapts to these changes, questions arise about the future of international monetary policy and the implications for global economic stability. The shift away from the petrodollar system, if confirmed, could mark a pivotal moment in economic history, reshaping global financial architecture and alliances. ■

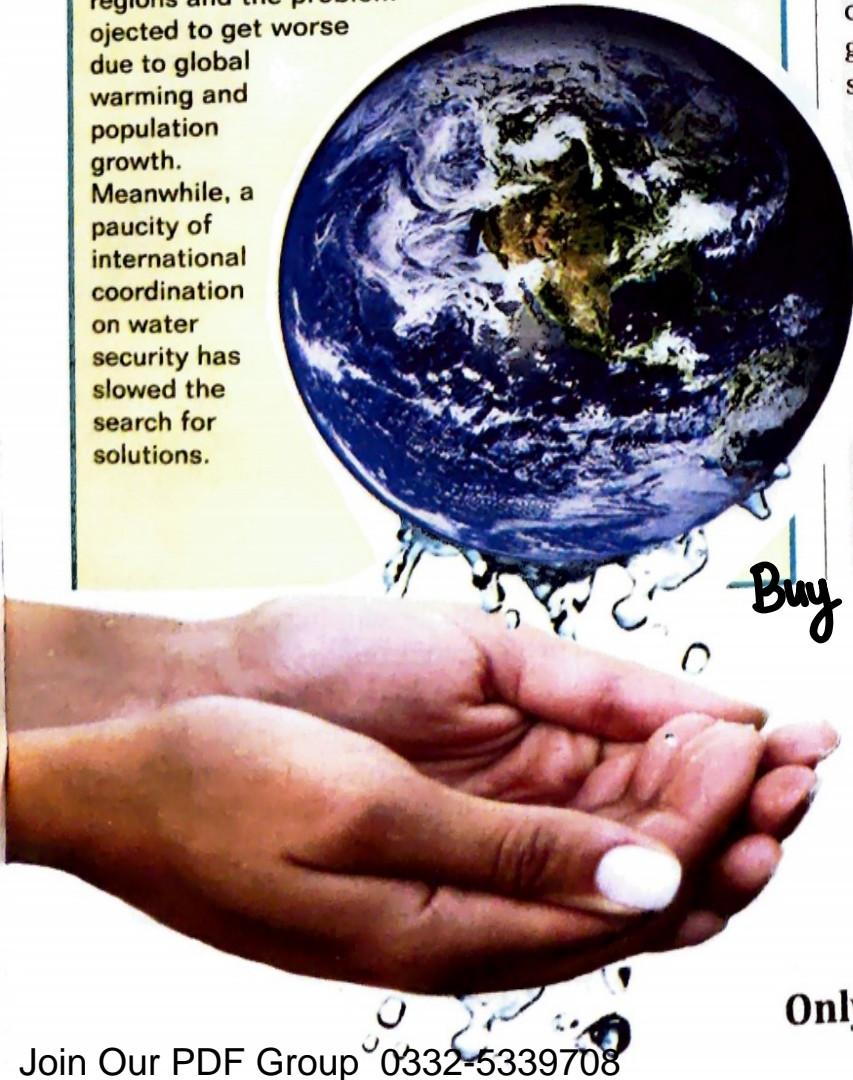
**INTERNATIONAL**

Water is essential for life. Human life cannot exist without clean drinking water. It is more than just a resource; it's the lifeblood of our planet, supporting human health, economic growth and environmental sustainability. It plays a critical role in every aspect of our lives, and yet, it is under stress. Over the past decades, the water resources and infrastructure needed for healthy populations and functional economies have come under increasing stress. Rapid demographic expansion, economic growth, pollution and inefficient resource management have led to the disappearance of 30 percent of natural freshwater ecosystems over

Water is the lifeblood of our planet, integral to sustaining life, supporting ecosystems, driving economic development, and maintaining social and geopolitical stability. It is a precious resource that is dwindling so fast that experts and several international organizations have repeatedly alarmed that a global water crisis is looming and its implications for human and economic development worldwide will be profound. At present, billions of people around the world live in water-stressed regions and the problem is projected to get worse due to global warming and population growth.

Meanwhile, a paucity of international coordination on water security has slowed the search for solutions.

ispr



Muhammad Sheeraz

the past 50 years. Nearly a third of the world's regional aquifers show not just a decline but an accelerating depletion. Climate change will further accentuate these pressures.

Highlighting the gravity of the situation, the World Bank released, in May this year, a report titled "Water for Shared Prosperity" wherein it has warned that as global temperatures rise, water supply will become more unpredictable, droughts will increase in frequency and severity, and disease outbreaks after floods will become more likely. It further states that approximately four billion people, which is almost two-thirds of the world's population, experience severe water scarcity for at least one month each year. Additionally, over two billion people live in countries where water supply is inadequate. Furthermore, it is projected that half of the world's population could be living in areas facing water scarcity as early as 2025. Declaring water a crucial source of prosperity, the report further says that realizing its benefits requires sustainable management and development of water resources, along with equitable and inclusive delivery of water services. However, disparities in access to water resources and services are widespread. These challenges, further compounded by population growth, rapid urbanization and climate change, pose a significant threat to shared prosperity, which is defined as "boosting prosperity, particularly for the poorest, to achieve more equitable societies".

However, shared prosperity goes beyond income and wealth. It is underpinned by a society that provides equal opportunities for all to thrive.

#### **How has water factored into international relations?**

Many freshwater sources transcend international borders, and, for the most part, national governments have been able to manage these resources cooperatively. Roughly 300 international water agreements have been signed since 1948. Finland and

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# **Global Water Crisis**

**Only collective action can help mitigate it**

## INTERNATIONAL

Russia, for example, have long cooperated on water-management challenges, including floods, fisheries and pollution. Water-sharing agreements have even persisted through cross-border conflicts about other issues, as has been the case with South Asia's Indus River and the Jordan River in the Middle East.

However, there are a handful of hot spots where transboundary waters are a source of tension, either because there is no agreement in place or an existing water regime is disputed. One of these is the Nile Basin, where the White and Blue flow from lakes in East Africa and to the Mediterranean Sea. Egypt claims the rights to most of the Nile's water based on several treaties, the first dating back to the colonial era; but other riparian states say they are not bound to the accords because they were never party to them. The dispute has flared in recent years after Ethiopia began construction of a massive hydroelectric dam that Egypt says drastically cuts its share of water.

Transboundary water disputes can also fuel intrastate conflict; some observers note this has increased in recent years, particularly in the hot spots where there are fears of cross-border conflict. For example, a new hydropower project could benefit elites but do little to improve the well-being of the communities that rely on those resources.

Moreover, water stress can affect global flows of goods and people. For instance, wildfires and drought in 2010 wiped out Russian crops, which resulted in a spike in commodity prices and food riots in Egypt and Tunisia at the start of the Arab uprisings. Climate stress is also pushing some to migrate across borders. The United Nations predicts that without interventions in climate change, water scarcity in arid and semi-arid regions will displace hundreds of millions of people by 2030.

**Key highlights of the report****a. Alarming statistics**

Significant gaps exist in access to water and



sanitation services globally. As of 2022, around 2.2 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water services and 3.5 billion lack access to safely managed sanitation. Eight out of ten people without basic drinking water and sanitation services reside in rural areas.

Furthermore, it is projected that half of the world's population could be living in areas facing water scarcity as early as 2025. This looming crisis will not only raise humanitarian concerns but will also pose significant economic risks as water is essential for economic growth. According to the World Bank, water scarcity could reduce global GDP by up to 6 percent by the year 2050 due to water-related losses in agriculture, health, income and prosperity.

**b. Regional disparities**

China and India, with 36% of the global population, hold only 11% of freshwater, while North America, with 5% of the population, possesses 52%. Moreover, the Democratic Republic of the Congo holds over half of Africa's water resources, yet regions like the Sahel, Southeastern Africa and South and Central Asia remain water-stressed. These regions have seen a regression in access to safe drinking water, with an additional 197 million people lacking access since 2000.

Disparities in access also affect marginalized groups based on gender, location, ethnicity, race and other social identities.

**c. Impact of climate change**

Climate change intensifies water-related risks, with developing countries facing more severe and prolonged droughts and floods. Over 800 million people are at high risk of drought and twice as many live in flood-prone areas. By 2100, meteorological drought is projected to impact 15% more of the global land area, increasing to nearly 50% when considering temperature effects.

Central Europe, Asia, the Horn of Africa, India, North America, Amazonia and central Australia will be the most affected. Poor populations are more exposed to water-related risks and have limited capacity to adapt, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

**d. Human capital and economic growth**

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Access to water and sanitation services is crucial for educational attainment and overall human capital development. In low-income countries, 56% of jobs are in water-intensive sectors, which are highly sensitive to water availability. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 62% of employment is in water-dependent jobs, with low rainfall significantly impacting GDP growth.

**e. Social cohesion and conflict**

Effective and equitable water management fosters community trust and cooperation, whereas mismanagement can exacerbate conflicts. Proper water resource management contributes to peace and social cohesion by promoting inclusivity and reducing tensions.

**Recommended interventions**

When water resources, infrastructure and services are not adequately managed, developed and delivered, water-related challenges—issues with too much, too

- Developing insurance programs for weather risks and mitigating exposure to hydro-climatic risks through regulations and financial support.

- Scaling up social protection schemes to assist vulnerable communities impacted by floods, droughts or both.

**b. Improving water resource development, management, and allocation by**

- Scaling up nature-based solutions through innovative financing schemes and evidence-based approaches.

- Enabling coordination of and cooperation for water allocation through information sharing and financial incentives.

- Adopting water accounting to inform water allocation decisions.

**c. Improving equitable and inclusive service**



little or too polluted water—can exacerbate inequalities and fragility. Throughout the value chain of water supply, from source to distribution, three types of interventions can significantly improve water security and, concurrently, reduce poverty and increase shared prosperity. These interventions aim to achieve: (1) resilience to extreme hydro-climatic risks, (2) water resources development and coordinated allocation to different water uses, and (3) equitable and inclusive delivery of water services.

Achieving these three policy objectives requires a comprehensive set of interventions. This report outlines the following policy recommendations that policymakers may consider to achieve equitable and inclusive water security.

**a. Enhancing resilience to extreme hydro-climatic risks for the poorest by:**

- Setting up robust and inclusive early-warning systems.

delivery by

- Scaling up financing through institutional and tariff reforms.
- Establishing participatory water governance to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Creating an enabling regulatory and policy environment to promote innovations.
- Improving coordination of institutions responsible for water, health, education and urban planning.

**Conclusion**

In the face of these looming threats to global water security, unfortunately, we see water as an unlimited resource and take it for granted. In order to maintain clean water preservation on earth, it is imperative that all stakeholders take concrete steps to accelerate their efforts in water conservation. ■

*The writer is a member of staff.*



## INTERNATIONAL

Aftab H. Wahla

In October 2022, the US State Department released the National Security Policy, underscoring the major challenges that the Biden administration aspired to navigate and surmount. The policy categorically noted that the "post-Cold War era is definitely over," emphasising the multipolar nature of international relations, wherein competing, and sometimes mutually exclusive, regional blocs are vying for support, access and influence in the developing world. Today, we are experiencing "vertical globalization," wherein the world is splitting into groups, both formal (alliances) and informal (trade corridors). From Chip4 in the Indo-Pacific, which aims to enhance cooperation between the members on design and production of sophisticated semiconductors, to the Lithium Alliance in Latin America; from I2U2 in the Middle East to the Middle Corridor in Central Asia, alliances and counter-alliances are emerging on an almost daily basis. These groups, driven by a multitude of interests, indicate the return of bloc politics in the international system. This has led to the slowing down of horizontal globalization, resulting in more fragmentation and causing shocks for everything; from the supply chain to environmental sustainability.

This "post-Cold War era" is increasingly characterized by three geopolitical groups driven by their desires to build a sphere of influence commensurate with their power. The IR experts of all ideological underpinnings opine that the Axis of Authoritarianism led by China and Russia, US-aligned democracies and the increasingly critical Global South are blocs that are influencing everything - from international peace and security to the global supply chain. In this regard, understanding the dynamics responsible for emerging bloc politics is worth closer examination.

We first start by knowing what exactly the blocs are so as to better grasp the fast-evolving geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape of the world.

Blocs are groupings of countries cemented by geopolitical and economic interests as well as ideological commonalities. Normally, countries belonging to the same bloc act as a single political force and coordinate with each other to pursue common interests. Countries within blocs coordinate their diplomatic, economic and military efforts to develop a cohesive strategy to tackle other competing blocs and secure their common interests in the 'anarchic' international system. Historically, alliances have been an integral part of world politics. A cursory look at the Thirty-Year War in the 17th century, the Concert of Europe in 1815, the unification of Germany and Italy and the consequent emergence of continental powers, the inter-war period, the Cold War and the Post-Cold War era shows that alliances and counter-alliances have always characterized international relations. The underlying

Recently, while speaking at the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting in Astana (Kazakhstan), Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, warned against bloc-based or confrontational geopolitics and advocated for a multipolar world firmly grounded in multilateralism. Reiterating Pakistan's firm adherence to the SCO Charter and the "Shanghai Spirit," which stands for mutual trust and respect for shared prosperity, he urged the rejection of myopic and self-serving interests to use the mantra of terrorism for political gains. In the following write-up, the writer has elaborated on the concept of bloc-based politics and its implications for global peace and prosperity.

# THE RETURN OF BLOC POLITICS



## INTERNATIONAL

objectives of all these bloc-based global politics have been the same: to maintain a balance of power and ensure a say in all critical decisions impacting global security, finance and trade. The era we live in, termed by Samuel Huntington as the Uni-Multipolar World, is also marked by competing geopolitical blocs attempting to carve out an exclusive sphere of influence to promote their common interests.

Now we see what factors are responsible for the emergence of these geopolitical blocs.

We first start with the Axis of Authoritarians, a bloc led by China and Russia and driven by the perceived, though genuine, grievances of these Eurasian giants rooted in historical experience and ideology. Concerning this, both states, historically, looked with deep hostility at the US grand strategy during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. The successive US administrations attempted to maintain the primacy of global capitalism and, where possible, establish democratic regimes. The vigour to achieve ideals of liberal internationalism did not subside with the disintegration of the USSR; instead, it gained further momentum in the 1990s and beyond. In the early 2000s, when China was well on the path of gaining the status of an economic heavyweight, the USA was preoccupied with containing the rising influence of China. It would not be wrong to say that the Cold War



was not as conclusive as the Western bloc had hoped. The competitive dynamics that marked the USSR-US Cold War are now simmering again, and the US is now struggling to deal with the tripolar nuclear problem, where China has joined Russia and the USA as leading nuclear states. Therefore, the so-called "strategic pause," as perceived by the West, was not a pause at all; the USA remained at loggerheads with states that were revisionist and attempting to redesign the international system - obviously, Russia and China. Out of these historical grievances and deep suspicions, Moscow and Beijing aligned in an anti-West bloc that was formalized by a "no-limit friendship" and "no forbidden area of cooperation" treaty just 20 days before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the first full-scale inter-state war after WWII. The refusal of China to condemn Russia for that and its naked violations of territorial integrity and sovereignty - the very foundation of the West-led and implemented Westphalian state system - further made it clear that China is eyeing an alternative international system that is more pluralistic and metropolitan. In short, since early in the Cold War, both China and Russia have looked at the USA as a geopolitical foe, determined to deny their legitimate sphere of influence and block their revisionist territorial claims. Therefore, when the West launched collective, punitive countermeasures in response to Ukraine's invasion, Beijing and Russia were convinced that their long-held perceptions of threat were not ill-founded. Now, this is a cycle; the more the US and its allies push to punish Russia and China, the more grounds they find to draw closer in their joint pursuit of carving a legitimate status in the international system commensurate with their powers. Recent years show that the Axis of Authoritarians is expanding its global footprint and giving tough times to the West. For instance, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the expansion of BRICS and the neutral stance of India, all indicate that the Sino-Russian alliance is working to create an alternative global world order. Besides these strategic and historical reasons, this authoritarian or autocratic Eurasian block has economic reasons as well to bolster inter-bloc cooperation and coordination. The rapid development of China has created a massive appetite for minerals, cereals and energy resources. Russia, on the other hand, experienced a steady decline in its influence and economic fortune, which became even worse with the imposition of sanctions after the February 2022 invasion. As a result, Putin had no choice but to partner with Xi, and this partnership is getting

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stronger with every passing day. The BBC reported in May 2024 that the trade between the two countries had reached \$240 billion (£191 billion) in 2023, more than 64% that in 2021. They have also reduced their dependence on the US dollar for bilateral trade - in May 2024, Putin and Xi highlighted the fact that the two countries conduct 90% of their bilateral trade in local currencies. Though the relations are lopsided, Sino-Russian cohesion is maintained by ideological underpinnings as well.

Ideologically, both states abhor the US-led liberal world order that emphasises the "so-called universal values" such as the sanctity of life, personal freedom, the right to self-defence and the rule of law. These values are directly opposite to the precepts on which Chinese and Russian regimes are founded. Therefore, to counter these liberal values, both Beijing and Moscow have come up with alternative ideologies combining statism, nationalism, mercantilism and authoritarianism. In this regard, China is more forthcoming and has come up with the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, and Global Civilization Initiative to present its own values, such as state-determined human rights, cultural conservatism and "traditional values." Though these politico-economic ideologies developed by Russia and China are not identical,

they are compatible enough to effect cohesion within the authoritarian bloc. Furthermore, since President Biden has started casting the opposition to China and Russia in ideological terms - democracy vs. authoritarianism - both these states are now even more convinced that the West is engaging in bloc politics and attempting to deny them their legitimate share in the international system.

Having discussed the factors responsible for drawing China, Russia and other authoritarian states (e.g. North Korea) closer together, it is also worth noting that the cohesion is fragile; there are many fault lines within this bloc.

Firstly, although China and Russia are united in their opposition to the US-led, rule-based world order, they have yet to crystallize a consensus on the long-term vision of their own systems. Apart from their support in the UN Security Council, they rarely combine their diplomatic efforts to push back the Western agenda. Secondly, China is an inward-looking country; it has



contradictions in its grand strategy and it remains ambiguous about what kind of global economic system it wants to impose. China has yet to play an active role as a mediator in international affairs; except for the Iran-KSA reconciliation, it adheres to the Panchsheel Principles, which call for non-interference and respect for territorial sovereignty. Thirdly, the BRICS framework is more or less economy-oriented, making it a geopolitical forum that can backfire and alienate some member countries, such as India, that want to remain on a neutral path. Therefore, it would not be wrong to conclude that the China-Russia bloc is not as cohesive as the Western bloc. It is a grouping of opportunistic countries drawn together due to their mutual wish to restrict US ambitions. This bloc is soft and fragmented, and the anticipated addition of North Korea, Iran and Syria would make matters more complicated. In particular, if Pakistan is made a part of it, it would create more geopolitical complications for this bloc.

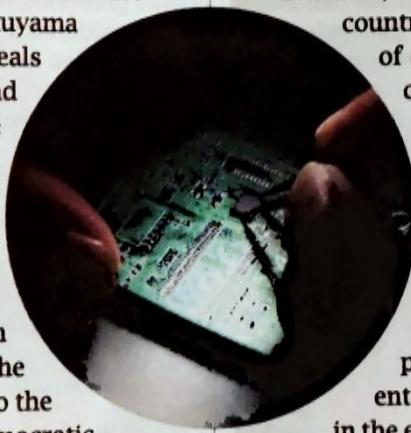
Now we move to the second major geopolitical group that has started to impact global politics and finance. This bloc, dubbed the Global South or non-binary Swing States, is led by India, Brazil, Indonesia and other emerging economies. This loosely organized and informal geopolitical bloc is often named the Global South, and member states are called

"middle powers." The middle powers are those states that have significant leverage in international relations but varying preferences for cooperation with great powers or superpowers. For instance, India is one such state. It practices "strategic autonomy" and has successfully cultivated strategic ties simultaneously with Russia, the USA, France and the Middle Eastern countries. In recent years, this group has risen to prominence; in particular, the G20 Summit in Delhi symbolized the triumph of the Global South, and "middle powers" successfully blunted the diplomatic manoeuvring of the West to isolate Russia and China. But it should be noted that the Global South is not an organized and well-oiled grouping; countries have divergent interests, and they have yet to find some ideological grounds as well to foster cohesion. Experts also believe that the Global South or Swing States bloc is not similar to the Non-Aligned Movement of the Cold War - NAM was founded on the joint opposition of the colonialism and imperialism, but countries in the

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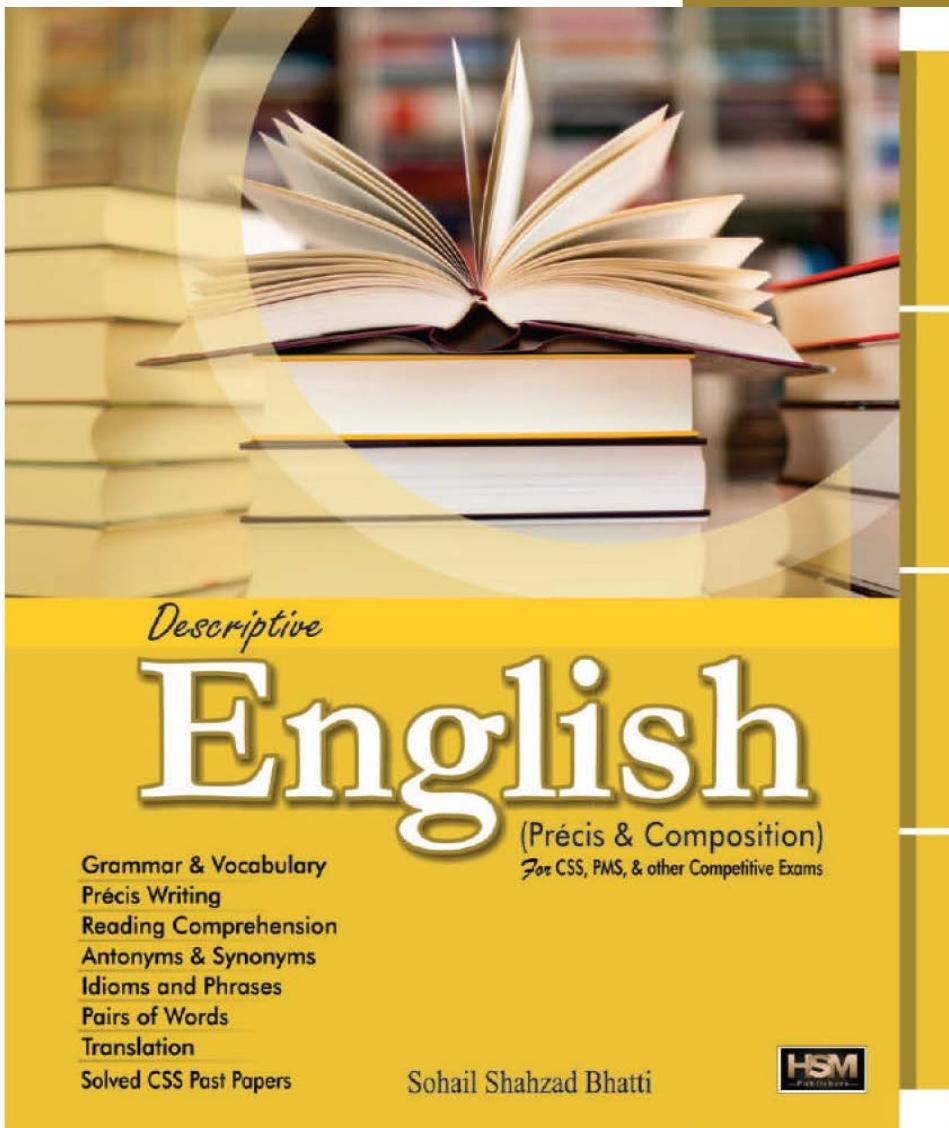
Global South love to practice a "multi-aligned" approach, implying that they would reap benefits from both Western and autocratic blocs. These countries also advocate for multi-polarity so that they can better protect their interests in global political and financial institutions. Furthermore, swing states are more powerful today than they used to be during the Cold War; they exert a significant influence that neither Beijing nor Washington can afford to ignore. The third bloc is the Western bloc, which President Biden loves to call the "Coalition of Democracies." This bloc comprises a triangle wherein the US stands at the apex, is embedded with Europe through NATO and other multilateral political-economic alliances, and is also linked with Asian partners through bilateral arrangements. This bloc advocates for liberal internationalism, emphasizing a free market economy, democracy and universally applicable human rights. The disintegration of the USSR added a strong impetus to the spread of liberal internationalism across the world, so much so that Francis Fukuyama went too far to claim that liberal ideals were the ultimate form of political and economic organizing principles. The post-Cold War era witnessed the zenith of liberal internationalism, backed by Tony Blair, President Obama and the likes. But the War on Terror backfired, undermining US efforts to democratize various Asian and Middle Eastern countries. The 2008-09 recession added more fuel to the fire, and the whole edifice of "democratic internationalism" began crumbling. Furthermore, the tumultuous 4-year period of Donald Trump administration caused more damage to US-backed liberal ideals, and country after country began to fall to populist and alt-right political parties and leadership. But the Ukraine-Russia war seems to have energized the Anglo-US bloc; the naked and unjustified aggression convinced countries in this bloc to align for their national security. As a result, Biden administration found a favourable atmosphere, at least, in European capitals to argue for greater cohesion and unity among the ranks of the Western bloc. Now this bloc has been reinvigorated and President Biden has restored the moment lost due to the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan and early fumbles over AUKUS, a security pact between Australia, the UK and the US to curb Chinese influence.

Furthermore, the expansion of NATO right to the border of Russia in the form of enlargement of its



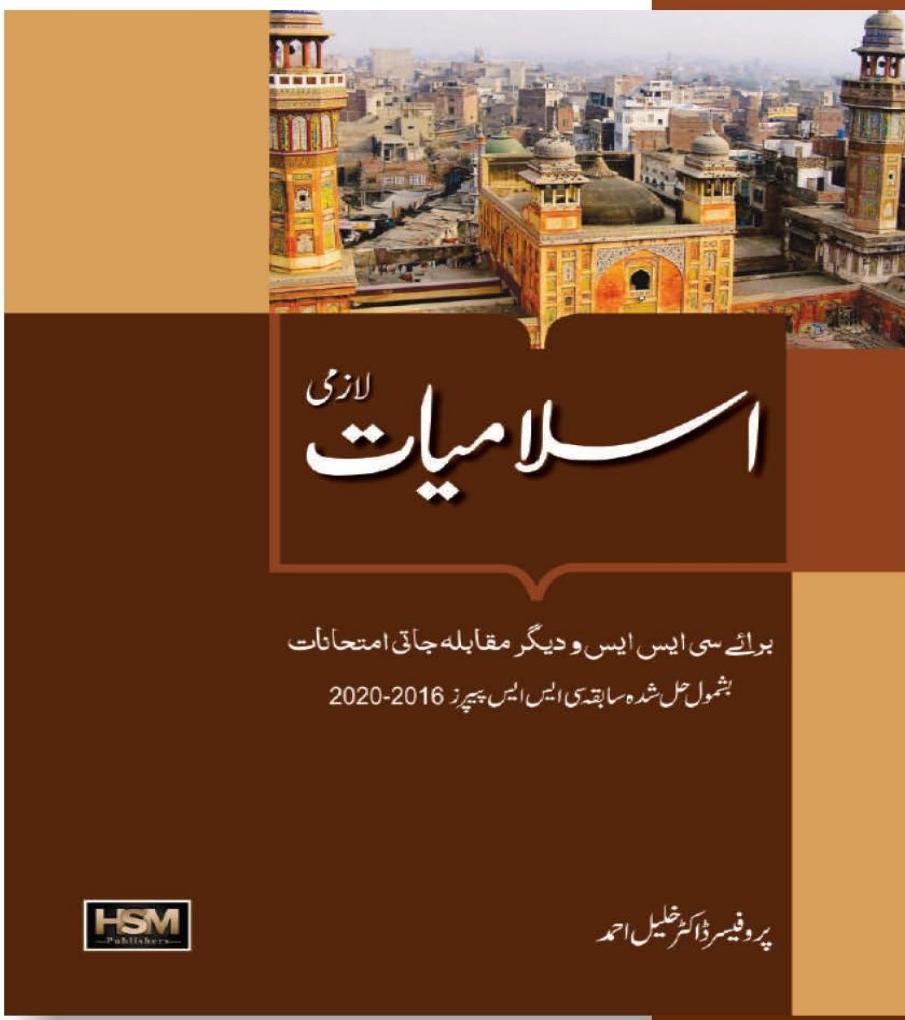
northern flank through the joining of Sweden and Finland; strengthened consensus over increased defence spending and the emergence of the G7 as the "steering committee of the free world," in the words of Jake Sullivan, indicate that this Western geopolitical alliance is witnessing more cohesion among all three vertices of the triangle. In conclusion, there is no denying that the era of bloc politics is just on the horizon. AUKUS, I2U2, IMEEC, enlargement of NATO, expansion of BRICS, renewed emphasis on BRI, deepening Sino-Russian strategic partnership and improved coordination among the Global South are manifestations of bloc politics. However, we should note that the Iron Curtain has not descended and will not descend in the near or distant future. The geopolitical blocs of the 21st century are different in many ways. First, these blocs are glued together more for strategic and economic reasons than ideological ones. Second, the membership is not exclusive; it is fluid and ever-changing and countries are interlinked with a complex web of economic links and modern means of communication. Third, the nature of the contest is broader; there are no longer explicit proxy wars or nuclear races, and the contest is being fought in cyberspace, upper space, emerging technologies, economic sanctions and the like realms. Finally, the world is no longer uni-polar or bi-polar; there are signs that we are entering the era of multi-polarity, at least in the economic, scientific, social and cultural spheres. More importantly, the anti-Western bloc is not a monolithic arrangement; there are underlying grievances and resistance to the overbearing influence of China. Experts are of the view that though the loosening of liberal internationalist order has enabled the emergence of an anti-Western bloc, the US-led alliance would continue to hold rule-making or amending powers due to technological superiority, vast reservoirs of financial and military resources, cohesion, cultural outreach, and influence in global institutions. Having said that, we should understand that the world cannot afford Cold War-like bloc politics; the challenges that we are confronting are well beyond the powers of any country; we need international cooperation; and this must be the cornerstone of any international order that superpowers are trying to design and implement.■

*The writer is a graduate of the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. He writes on national and international affairs*



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**INTERNATIONAL**

On May 21, in what is being considered a major breakthrough for small island states threatened by the rise in sea levels caused by global warming, a global maritime court found that greenhouse gases (GHGs) constitute marine pollution.

court found that greenhouse gases (GHGs) constitute marine pollution. In its first climate-related judgment, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, also known as "The Oceans Court," said emissions from fossil fuels and other planet-warming gases that are absorbed by the oceans count as marine pollution. Its ruling - an "advisory opinion" that should nevertheless provide a precedent for cases elsewhere - also said that countries must take all necessary measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment from GHG emissions, adding that countries must go beyond the requirements of the landmark 2015

Paris

**Osman Khan**

Climate Agreement to protect the marine environment and the states that depend on it.

The ITLOS's decision is a major victory for the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS), a coalition of nine nations from the Caribbean and the Pacific. For these small island states, climate change is an existential threat. Protecting the world's oceans, which act as important heat and carbon sinks, is key to maintaining their fish stocks, reducing the frequency and intensity of devastating storms, and preserving plants and wildlife. Experts have hailed the verdict as a major decision that could impact how nations around the world address climate change and protect the ocean.

#### **The importance of the ocean**

The ocean's health affects us all. It provides half the oxygen

**The ocean, our planet's vast blue heart, has been sending out CO<sub>2</sub> alert signals for years. Rising sea levels, acidification, and coral bleaching are just a few of the symptoms of an ocean under immense distress. Now, in a landmark decision, an international court has confirmed what many scientists and activists have long suspected: carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), the notorious greenhouse gas, is officially a pollutant of the sea. In its "historic" legal opinion, delivered recently, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) has outlined countries' obligations in the face of climate change. This international ocean court found that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions can be considered a marine pollutant. It said countries have a legal obligation to implement measures mitigating their effect on oceans.**

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# **The Ocean and CLIMATE CHANGE**

**States have legal obligations to cut marine emission**

## INTERNATIONAL

we breathe, playing a crucial role in maintaining the balance of our atmosphere. Additionally, the ocean regulates our climate by absorbing significant amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> and heat. It supports a vast web of life, from microscopic plankton to the largest whales, forming the basis of the food chain that feeds billions of people. The degradation of our oceans threatens biodiversity, food security and the stability of our climate, impacting everyone. However, when CO<sub>2</sub> dissolves in seawater, it forms carbonic acid in a process called ocean acidification. This increases the acidity of water, disrupting the delicate balance of marine ecosystems. It's like a slow-burning chemical reaction that threatens the very foundation of ocean life. The effects of this acidification are already being felt around the world. Coral reefs, vibrant underwater cities that support a quarter of all marine species, are particularly vulnerable.

Acidic water makes it difficult for corals to build their skeletons, leading to widespread bleaching and death.

Rising sea levels, another consequence of climate change, are threatening coastal communities and ecosystems. Low-lying islands, like those that brought this case to ITLOS, are facing an existential crisis. Their land is slowly being swallowed by the sea, a direct result of the GHGs we've pumped into the atmosphere.

#### Background of the case

The request for the opinion was made in 2022 by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law, a coalition of nations spearheaded by the Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda and the Pacific island country of Tuvalu. These states are among the most vulnerable nations to climate change, facing encroaching seas, record-breaking temperatures and increasingly severe storms. Ocean temperatures, in particular, have increased, worsening the impact on coastal states. These nations have scant economic power but are acutely vulnerable to climate change. Principal threats include sea-level rise, severe weather events and the depletion of fish and other ocean resources.

Although protecting the world's oceans, which act as important heat and carbon sinks, is key to maintaining fish stocks, reducing the frequency and intensity of devastating storms, and preserving plants and

wildlife. These states have long felt neglected by successive global summits where pledges to cut carbon emissions have fallen far short of the minimum for limiting the worst effects of global warming.

#### Questions asked

The group asked the court to specify what obligations signatories of the maritime treaty have in relation to the effects of climate change caused by human activity, and to protecting the marine environment from ocean warming and sea level rise. Precisely, the COSIS asked two questions:

1. What are the specific obligations on state parties under UNCLOS to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment resulting from climate change or ocean acidification?
2. What are the specific obligations under UNCLOS to protect and preserve the marine environment in relation to climate change and ocean acidification?

#### What did the ITLOS say?

The tribunal's advisory opinion confirmed, for the first time, that the 168 UNCLOS parties must address



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climate change and ocean acidification in order to comply with their obligations under the law of the sea. First, ITLOS confirmed that GHG emissions and the heat generated by a warming climate meet the definition of "pollution" under Article 1(4) of UNCLOS. This is important because under Part XII of UNCLOS, states have obligations to prevent, control and mitigate pollution of the marine environment from any source.

Second, the tribunal confirmed the obligation under Article 194 of UNCLOS to prevent and control pollution applies to greenhouse gas emissions. This includes emissions already accumulated in the atmosphere. States, therefore, must take all necessary measures to address climate change pollution and ocean acidification.

The tribunal adopted a broad definition of "necessary". It includes indispensable measures but "also other measures which make it possible to achieve that objective".

## INTERNATIONAL

Such measures must be underpinned by science, international rules relating to climate change, and the capacity of individual states.

The tribunal said states could draw on relevant rules and standards developed by the UNFCCC. But, importantly, it said complying with UNFCCC obligations was "not necessarily sufficient" for states to meet their obligations under UNCLOS.

Third, the tribunal interpreted the more general obligations under UNCLOS to protect and preserve the marine environment to apply specifically to climate change and ocean acidification. This includes the duty to cooperate, to carry out environmental assessments, and fulfil obligations in the context of fisheries management.

#### **Key obligations outlined**

**Marine pollution:** Countries must prevent, reduce and control pollution from anthropogenic GHG emissions.

**Marine environment protection:** Obligations include addressing ocean warming, sea-level rise and acidification.

**Due diligence:** States must take "all necessary measures" guided by the best available science.

**Precautionary approach:** It is required in the absence of scientific certainty.

**Compliance:** States must align measures with climate treaties like the Paris Agreement, ensuring actions are consistent with UNCLOS.

#### **Widening the horizon**

The international tribunal ruling closely follows the recent ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, wherein the court held Switzerland liable for not taking effective measures against climate change, thus violating the human rights of the complainants. Advances in environmental law jurisprudence will encourage further climate litigation across the globe. With this ruling, we can expect that state parties will

deploy the UNCLOS to hold other nations liable for any breach of climate obligations or if they find themselves to be victims of the adverse effects of climate change caused by the anthropogenic emissions of other countries.

#### **Implementation**

**National systems:** States must establish effective legislative and administrative frameworks to enforce these obligations.

**Enhanced measures:** States can implement more stringent measures for marine protection, consistent with international law.

#### **Global importance**

While it's an advisory opinion, the tribunal's findings are authoritative. Previous advisory opinions have made important contributions to the law. For example, the tribunal's decisions on deep-seabed mining and illegal fishing in waters under the jurisdiction of states developed the concept of due diligence as a standard of care under the law of the sea.

Although this is only an advisory and technically addressed to COSIS and its members, this decision is important for all states. It clarifies that parties to UNCLOS have a duty under the law of the sea to address climate change impacts on the ocean. It also confirms that it is not sufficient to rely solely on measures under the UNFCCC to meet those obligations. This means countries must explicitly consider their obligations under the law of the sea and

the UNFCCC regime when authorising activities contributing to global climate change, such as offshore oil production, and when adopting climate adaptation measures.

#### **Conclusion**

This ITLOS ruling can be a catalyst for change, pushing governments and industries to take more aggressive action to reduce emissions. It's a reminder that we're all connected to the ocean, whether we live by the coast or not. The ocean's health is our health, and it's time we started treating it with the respect it deserves. Under the law of the sea, states bear responsibility for failing to comply with obligations to prevent pollution and protect the marine environment. The tribunal has confirmed these obligations apply to climate change and ocean acidification. This advisory opinion can open the door to future litigation of climate change issues related to the oceans, including through the convention's compulsory dispute resolution mechanisms.

*The writer is an expert on International Law.*

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## INTERNATIONAL

Dr. Mahjabeen Qureshi

**V**oters in the 27 European Union member states have sent a stern warning to mainstream political powers, wreaking havoc on French and, to a lesser degree, German politics, and rewarding hardline nationalist parties in a number of countries. This all happened between June 6 and June 9, when about 51% of 370 million-plus electors in 27 EU countries voted to elect their representatives in the 720-seat European Parliament. These were the tenth parliamentary election since the first direct elections in 1979, and the first after Brexit. These elections, a gargantuan democratic exercise which sometimes people dismiss as symbolic that doesn't matter much in practice, have been held at a time when the war in Ukraine

remained dominant in the voting. The gains of the far right came at the expense of the Greens, who were expected to lose about 20 seats and fall back to sixth position in the legislature.

In the legislature, provisional results showed that the Christian Democrats would have 189 seats, up 13, the Social Democrats 135, down 4, and the pro-business Renew group 83, down 19. The Greens slumped to 53, down 18.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni more than doubled her party's seats in the assembly. And despite being hounded by a scandal involving candidates, the Alternative for Germany extreme right party still rallied enough seats to sweep past the slumping Social Democrats of Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Scholz's governing Social

**The ground beneath the feet of European Union leaders has shifted after voting across the 27-member bloc delivered a clear turn to the right in the European Parliament, shaking up governments in member states and leaving mainstream groups at a crossroads. But the surge by**

rages on, countries all across the continent are facing rising nationalist and nativist sentiment and far-right parties were poised to make great gains. Projected results have shown a strong gain for the far right parties in some countries — though not enough to win command of the parliament itself — while many incumbent centrist and Green parties have stumbled.

#### Who won and who lost?

Overall, across the EU, two mainstream and pro-European groups, the Christian Democrats and the Socialists,

nationalist and populist parties across Europe will make it much harder for the assembly to approve legislation on issues ranging from climate change to agriculture policy for the next five years.



Democratic party was humiliated as the Alternative for Germany surged into second place. Thus, in the EU's most populous nation, voters had not been dissuaded by the AfD's scandals as it rose to 16.5%, up from 11% in 2019. In comparison, the combined result for the three parties in the German governing coalition barely topped 30%.

Sensing a threat from the far right, the Christian Democrats of EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had already shifted further to the right on migration and climate

## INTERNATIONAL

ahead of the elections — and were rewarded by remaining by far the biggest group in the 720-seat European Parliament and de-facto brokers of the ever-expanding powers of the legislature.

Undoubtedly, however, the star on a stunning electoral night was the National Rally Party of Marine Le Pen, which dominated the French polls to such an extent that Macron immediately dissolved the national parliament and called for snap elections. Her National Rally won over 30%, or about twice as much as Macron's pro-European centrist Renew party, which is projected to reach less than 15%. It was a massive political risk since Macron's party could suffer more losses, hobbling the rest of his presidential term that ends in 2027.

#### **What does this mean for national leaders?**

As is usually the case during European Parliament elections, citizens across the bloc used their vote as de-facto referendums on their national governments. In France, the overwhelming victory scored by the far-right National Rally provoked President Emmanuel Macron to react by dissolving the National Assembly and calling a snap election.

While no other national leader reacted with such dramatic flare, the negative results for governing parties in countries like Germany and Hungary were interpreted as blows for their respective leaders.

In Denmark, Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen's Social Democrats retained their seats in a vote that was cast as a referendum on her centrist government's handling of immigration. In Spain, an attempt to present the election as a plebiscite on Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez failed: His Socialist party nearly tied with the center-right People's Party, undermining the conservatives' bid to use the results to bring down his minority coalition government.

#### **Future outlook**

The crushing blow inflicted on the liberals in France

and the Greens in Germany looks set to make it tougher for a mainstream centrist alliance to set Europe's course for the next five years, compromising key EU projects, including the Green Deal. Under this parliament, it will be hard to read a clear strategic agenda other than some of the core principles around security and the economy.

Although European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen's has made a complacent statement that "the centre is holding," yet it is true only in the aggregate distribution of seats between the main party groups in the European parliament, with her own centre-right European People's Party group coming out comfortably on top. In reality, the EU is run by national governments even more than by its directly elected parliament, and these elections produced hard-right successes in core member states that range from the significant to the shocking. These Eurosceptic parties are all expected to continue to pull the EU to the right from inside, with an even harder line on immigration, determined opposition to the green measures urgently needed to address the climate crisis, reduced support for Ukraine and nationalist as they all are - clawing back national control from Brussels. Moreover, a victory for Donald Trump in the 2024 US presidential election would weaken and probably further divide Europe, as hard-right populist nationalists, quite possibly including Meloni, would line up as the European party of Trump.

#### **Conclusion**

The tectonic plates are shifting. Right is up, left is down, and the center remains, barely though. European Parliament elections across the European Union's twenty-seven member states with huge gains for far-right parties but the centrist "grand coalition" nevertheless projected to emerge largely intact. These elections clearly show that the EU and its boosters are failing to contain the public's anger. Voters have used these elections to deliver a powerful challenge, both to their complacent rulers at home and to the unelected bureaucracy in Brussels. The mainstream elite consensus - on borders, climate change and ever-greater EU integration - is coming under unprecedented populist pressure. European elites have pulled every trick in the book to try to put the brakes on the populist surge, seemingly to little avail. The EU has never allowed the democratic wishes of the public to intrude on its affairs before, so it is unlikely to start now. The EU has rarely felt more fragile.

*The writer is an academic.*



## INTERNATIONAL

# RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC

# RESILIENCE

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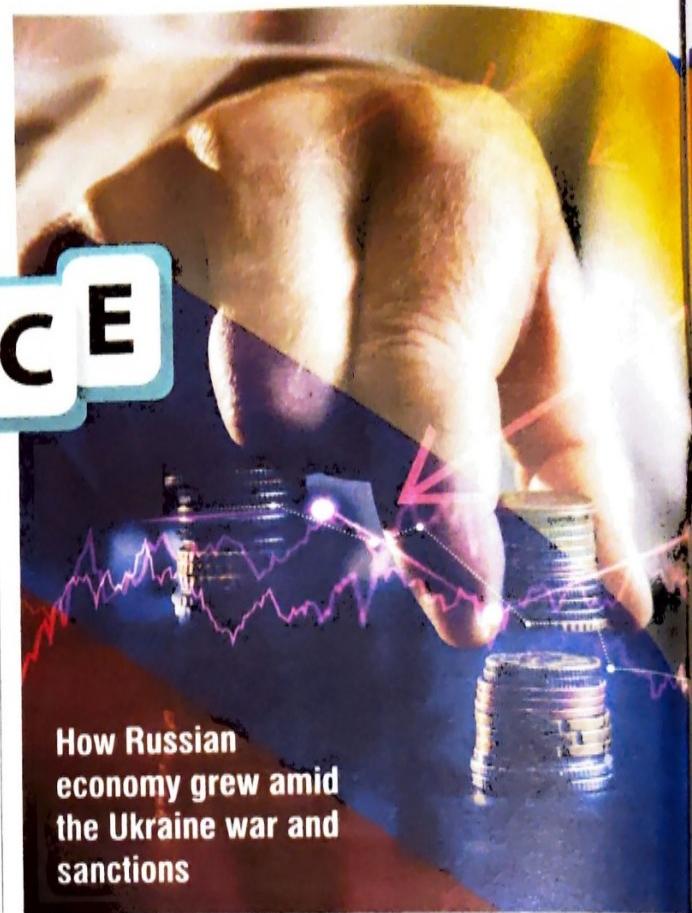
Dr. Muhammad Ahmad

**When Russia invaded Ukraine more than two years ago, the West rushed to impose sanctions, hoping to cripple its economy. Despite several rounds of sanctions levied by Western powers over the war in Ukraine, the Russian economy registered strong growth of 3.6 percent in 2023, following a relatively mild contraction of 1.2% in 2022. Now, with Vladimir Putin beginning his fifth term as president, the world is reckoning with a strange reality: The Russian economy is growing at a fast clip.**

Russia's economy has not only withstood an onslaught of sanctions from western countries but has grown at such a pace that it has surprised both the West and Russia's own central bank. Recently, the London-based European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) issued fresh GDP projections for the regions in which it operates. The projection for Russia states that the country's resilient economy is set to expand 2.5 percent in 2024, as it is already back above levels seen prior to its 2022 invasion of Ukraine. It still marks a significant slowdown from the 3.6 percent growth it registered in 2023, though.

#### Introduction

When Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, the response of the United



**How Russian economy grew amid the Ukraine war and sanctions**

States and its European allies was to impose economic sanctions on Russia and arm Ukraine for a prolonged war of resistance against Russian occupation. When Ukraine's defenses proved much more robust than expected, pushing Russia's army back and retaking territory, the US-led coalition supporting Kyiv poured in advanced weapons and entertained hopes of an outright victory. However, a Ukrainian counteroffensive fizzled last year; Russia has proven resilient, economically and militarily. Russia has recorded robust growth since the economic contraction of 2022, surpassing many expert forecasts.

Rossstat, Russia's national statistics agency, reported a growth rate of 3.6 percent for the Russian economy in 2023 while the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated growth at around 3 percent. The IMF has thus revised its forecast for 2024 upward to 2.6 percent given the Russian economy's strong performance last year.



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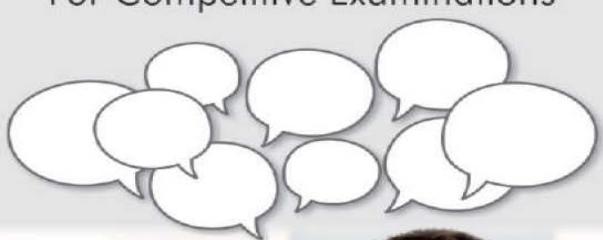
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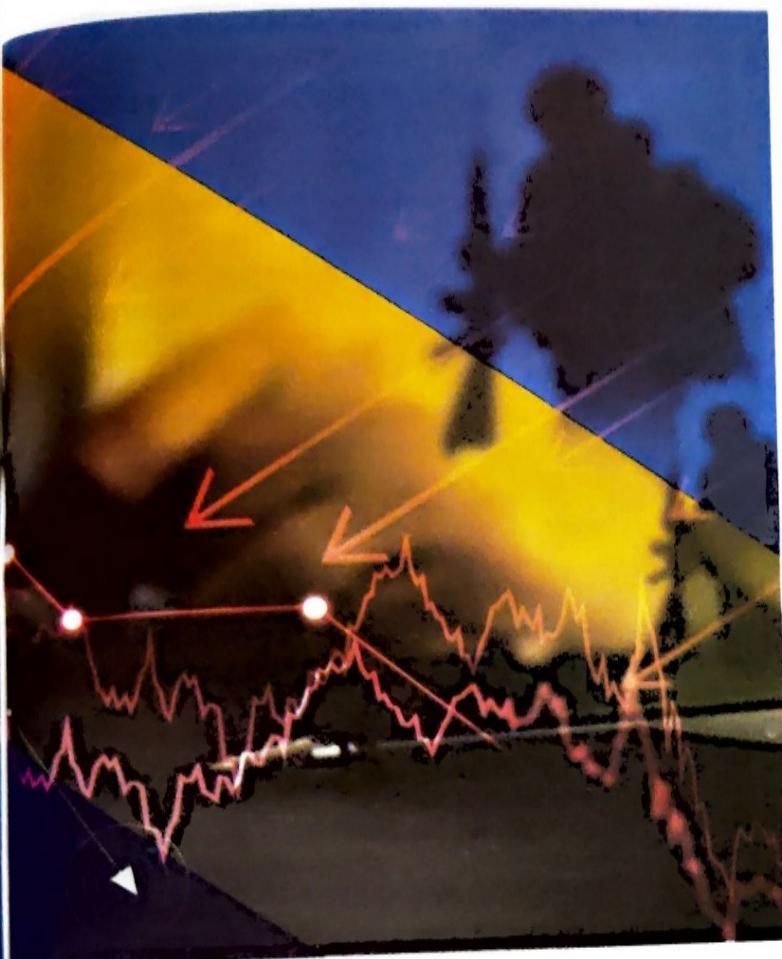
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It seems that the country's war conditions have caused the economy to grow faster than expectations. Local demand, driven by state spending, is outstripping domestic industry's ability to increase production. Meanwhile, manufacturers are feeling the pinch from one scarce resource in particular, personnel. That's evidenced by unprecedented low unemployment and the subsequent salary race among Russian companies to attract workers.

**Some undeniable signs**

President Putin has recently visited China where he met with China's leader, Xi Jinping, in Beijing. Russian-Chinese bilateral trade has soared since the Ukraine invasion.

Yet another sign of Russia's resilience was the launch of a recent offensive drive in the north near Kharkiv, taking Ukrainian forces off guard. Moreover, Russia is directing a third of the country's budget — Rbs9.6tn in 2023 and Rbs14.3tn in 2024 — towards the war effort, a threefold increase from 2021, the last full year before the invasion. This includes not only producing hardware, but also giving war-related social payments to those who fight in Ukraine and their families, as well as some spending on the occupied territories. Besides, the planned massive increase in public

spending, particularly military spending, in 2024 also proves this fact. The Russian government plans to spend \$119 billion on defence in 2024, a rise of nearly 90 percent from 2021. The significant increase in military expenditure marks "a striking break with Russia's post-Communist development to date," a recent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) paper concluded.

**The 5 factors**

While it might be tempting to put this economic resilience down to a massive defence build-up, there could be more factors at play. And while the jury is still out on how long this will last, things are not as bad as they should theoretically have been. The Russian job market is strong, unemployment is at a record low, and rising wages continue to propel consumer spending. There are a few factors at play that could explain the doggedness of the Russian economy.

**1. Futile sanctions**

The sanctions on the Russian energy sector are not as tight as they were when imposed on countries such as Iran or Venezuela. There is significant elbow room, and that is almost by design. The sanctions were formulated by the West keeping their own interests in mind, effectively to ensure that Russia continues to produce fossil fuels despite the sanctions on its energy sector, so that there is no significant surge in oil prices. Higher oil prices would have been counter-productive for the economies of the western countries, and so the sanctions, and the subsequent price caps, were loosely designed.

So, while Russia's fossil fuel exports to most of Western Europe have fallen, the overall export volumes have been relatively steady despite all the sanctions. This is because the oil that used to go to Europe is now being absorbed elsewhere, especially in China and India.

**2. Corporate investment**

Corporate investment in Russia has recovered from the drop in 2022, adding an estimated 4.5 percentage points to the growth in GDP in 2023. Investment is being bolstered by increased resources flowing to the country's defence and manufacturing sectors. In addition, the sanctions imposed after the start of the invasion of Ukraine have made a retooling of the economy necessary.

The IMF, for instance, has highlighted that some imports are being substituted by domestic goods, resulting in investments in new production facilities. Also, some multinational corporations have stayed back, in the hope that the war would end and sanctions be lifted.

**3. Rebound of private consumption**

## INTERNATIONAL

Russia's private consumption has recovered strongly, adding 2.9 percentage points to GDP growth. This is being driven by buoyant credit and a strong labour market, with record low unemployment of just 3% and a general rise in wages. The largely voluntary military recruitment model, using monetary incentives, has let sections of consumers carry on with their spending.

**4. Government spending**

Government spending too has added to growth but more modestly, with the fiscal impulse estimated at 1.2 percentage points of GDP in 2023. Local demand, driven by state spending, is outstripping domestic industry's ability to increase

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country's policymakers had already factored in that cost. The economy and Moscow's policy mandarins have learned to manoeuvre around these punitive measures over time.

**Conclusion**

So far, Russia has proved adept at bypassing sanctions, or at least in mitigating their negative effect, in part through a pivot to Asia for trade. One of the West's measures to deprive the Kremlin of petrodollars, the price cap for Russian crude, is becoming increasingly unenforceable. And there's

evidence that Russia has been able to adapt to more complicated payment processes and logistics. Exports are rebounding, and so is foreign-exchange revenue,

**Examples of Sanctions in International Relations**

In international relations, sanctions are a tool that nations and nongovernmental agencies use to influence or to punish other nations or non-state actors. Most sanctions are economic in nature, but they may also carry the threat of diplomatic or military consequences as well. Sanctions can be unilateral, meaning they are imposed only by one nation, or bilateral, meaning a bloc of nations (such as a trade group) is imposing the penalties.

**Economic Sanctions**

The Council on Foreign Relations defines sanctions as "a lower-cost, lower-risk, middle course of action between diplomacy and war." Money is that middle course, and economic sanctions are the means. Some of the most common punitive financial measures include:

**Tariffs:** Surcharges on imported goods, often imposed to aid domestic industries and markets.

**Quotas:** Limits on the number of goods that may be imported or exported.

**Embargoes:** Restrictions on or cessation of trading with a nation or bloc of nations. These can include limiting or banning travel by individuals to and from nations.

**Non-tariff barriers:** These are designed to make foreign goods more expensive by complying with onerous regulatory requirements.

**Asset seizure/freeze:** Capturing or holding the financial assets of nations, citizens or preventing the sale or moving of those assets.

Oftentimes, economic sanctions are linked to treaties or other diplomatic agreements between nations. They could be revocation of preferential treatment such as Most Favoured Nation status or import quotas against a country not abiding by agreed international rules of trade.

Sanctions may also be imposed to isolate a nation for political or military reasons. The United States has imposed severe economic penalties against North Korea in response to that nation's efforts to develop nuclear weapons, for example, and the US does not maintain diplomatic relations, either.

Sanctions are not always economic in nature. President Carter's boycott of the Moscow Olympics in 1980 can be viewed as a form of diplomatic and cultural sanctions imposed in protest against the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Russia retaliated in 1984, leading a multination boycott of the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.

production. Besides, defence spending in Russia has been ramped up to an estimated 7% of GDP. Despite the large increase in military spending, overall government spending has increased, but not as much in real terms, according to economists.

**5. Prudent policymaking**

Some financial sanctions on Russia had already been imposed in 2014 after the Crimea invasion, and the

according to the central bank. That's despite the US ramping up pressure with the threat of secondary sanctions on countries still friendly to Moscow. For now, neither sanctions nor tight monetary conditions seem to be having much success slowing down the Russian economy. □

*The writer is a Karachi-based academic.*

# A Chronicle of the Palestine-Israel CONFLICT

## Unveiling the Long Shadow

The decades-old Israel-Palestine issue is one of the most enduring and contentious conflicts in modern history, with profound implications for regional stability, international relations, human rights, and global geopolitics. This issue is both complex and diverse and needs a deep understanding. Resolving the conflict is essential for peace and stability in the Middle East and has broader implications for international relations and global security. A just and lasting solution requires addressing the core issues of borders, security, refugees, and the status of Jerusalem, and fostering a mutual recognition of the rights and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians. In this article, the writer has chronicled the main events that contributed to the Palestine debacle.

**W**hen Hamas launched an offensive against Israel on October 7, the Zionist state retaliated with ferocity, unleashing a large-scale operation that has turned Gaza into an inferno, leaving death, destruction and despair in its wake. So far, more than 35,000 Gazans have lost their lives - 15,000 among them being women and children. Over the past few months, several efforts have been made to halt the genocide in Gaza. From the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to the verdicts of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), but still no signs of ending this war are in sight.

The Palestine issue emerged with the call of Theodore Herzl, the father of political Zionism, for a separate Jewish state on the Palestinian land. Herzl greatly promoted Jewish immigration to the land of Palestine to form a Jewish state there.

### World War I and Palestine

At the time of World War I, the land of Palestine was a part of the Ottoman Empire, which was also a party in this war against the British. In this war, Palestine suffered the most at the hands of the British, who were fighting with an unending, enormous financial support



Shehzad Ahmed Brohi

from the Jewish elites. Consequently, the famine that the war created and the fall of some crucial Palestinian cities, e.g. Jaffa, made the situation worse for the indigenous Palestinians.

### The Balfour Declaration

Another event that significantly contributed to the conflict was the Balfour Declaration. On November 2, 1917, just a year before the end of WWI, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Arthur James Balfour, issued a statement, which came to be known as the Balfour Declaration - it was, in fact, a letter written by Mr. Balfour to Lionel Walter Rothschild — scion of the Rothschild family, a prominent Zionist and a friend of Chaim Weizmann — in which he expressed the British government's support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The statement said, "His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other

## INTERNATIONAL

we breathe, playing a crucial role in maintaining the balance of our atmosphere. Additionally, the ocean regulates our climate by absorbing significant amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> and heat. It supports a vast web of life, from microscopic plankton to the largest whales, forming the basis of the food chain that feeds billions of people. The degradation of our oceans threatens biodiversity, food security and the stability of our climate, impacting everyone. However, when CO<sub>2</sub> dissolves in seawater, it forms carbonic acid in a process called ocean acidification. This increases the acidity of water, disrupting the delicate balance of marine ecosystems. It's like a slow-burning chemical reaction that threatens the very foundation of ocean life. The effects of this acidification are already being felt around the world. Coral reefs, vibrant underwater cities that support a quarter of all marine species, are particularly vulnerable.

Acidic water makes it difficult for corals to build their skeletons, leading to widespread bleaching and death. Rising sea levels, another consequence of climate change, are threatening coastal communities and ecosystems. Low-lying islands, like those that brought this case to ITLOS, are facing an existential crisis. Their land is slowly being swallowed by the sea, a direct result of the GHGs we've pumped into the atmosphere.

**Background of the case**

The request for the opinion was made in 2022 by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law, a coalition of nations spearheaded by the Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda and the Pacific island country of Tuvalu. These states are among the most vulnerable nations to climate change, facing encroaching seas, record-breaking temperatures and increasingly severe storms. Ocean temperatures, in particular, have increased, worsening the impact on coastal states. These nations have scant economic power but are acutely vulnerable to climate change. Principal threats include sea-level rise, severe weather events and the depletion of fish and other ocean resources.

Although protecting the world's oceans, which act as important heat and carbon sinks, is key to maintaining fish stocks, reducing the frequency and intensity of devastating storms, and preserving plants and

wildlife. These states have long felt neglected by successive global summits where pledges to cut carbon emissions have fallen far short of the minimum for limiting the worst effects of global warming.

**Questions asked**

The group asked the court to specify what obligations signatories of the maritime treaty have in relation to the effects of climate change caused by human activity, and to protecting the marine environment from ocean warming and sea level rise. Precisely, the COSIS asked two questions:

1. What are the specific obligations on state parties under UNCLOS to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment resulting from climate change or ocean acidification?
2. What are the specific obligations under UNCLOS to protect and preserve the marine environment in relation to climate change and ocean acidification?

**What did the ITLOS say?**

The tribunal's advisory opinion confirmed, for the first time, that the 168 UNCLOS parties must address



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climate change and ocean acidification in order to comply with their obligations under the law of the sea. First, ITLOS confirmed that GHG emissions and the heat generated by a warming climate meet the definition of "pollution" under Article 1(4) of UNCLOS. This is important because under Part XII of UNCLOS, states have obligations to prevent, control and mitigate pollution of the marine environment from any source.

Second, the tribunal confirmed the obligation under Article 194 of UNCLOS to prevent and control pollution applies to greenhouse gas emissions. This includes emissions already accumulated in the atmosphere. States, therefore, must take all necessary measures to address climate change pollution and ocean acidification.

The tribunal adopted a broad definition of "necessary". It includes indispensable measures but "also other measures which make it possible to achieve that objective".

**INTERNATIONAL**

war, Israel emerged victorious in this war too, as it gained control of the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and east Jerusalem, in just six days. It was a major blow to the participating Arab countries.

**Yom Kippur War**

In 1974, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel on the sacred day of Jews, Yom Kippur. This war is also called the October War and, in it, Egypt and Syria inflicted huge damage on Israel, but, ultimately, Israel again emerged victorious.

**Camp David Accords**

The Camp David Accords were a set of agreements between Israel and Egypt that eased their tensions. Brokered by US President Jimmy Carter, the Accords were signed on 17 September 1978. By it, Egypt recognized the state of Israel and got back its captured Sinai Peninsula. The agreements were negotiated at Camp David, the presidential retreat in Maryland, and signed at the White House.

**Targeting PLO**

The invasion of Lebanon by Israel took place on June 4, 1982, against the PLO, whose political activists were operating from there. Israel carried out its barbarism by bombing the Lebanese capital, Beirut, by air, land and sea, and the Jewish forces also cut off the supply of water, food, fuel and electricity. The prime aim of the bombardment was to terrorize local people to make them against the PLO, as it is now against Hamas.

In the same way, on July 8, the PLO presented its 11-point plan for the withdrawal of its forces from Beirut. Similarly, on August 12, the final terms for departure were fixed, and the withdrawal was made between August 21 and September 1.

**The First Palestinian Intifada**

The first Palestinian uprising, also called Intifada, broke out in December 1987 and lasted until 1995. The Intifada occurred when an Israeli army vehicle struck a truck in the Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, killing four Palestinians. In this intifada, a total of 1422 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli army. However, the intifada proved successful in showing the real face of Israel to the world.

**Formation of Hamas**

Hamas was formed in 1987 by Ahmad Yassin, a Palestinian politician and imam. Hamas stands for "Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya," which means Islamic Resistance Movement. It also means zeal. Hamas, a nationalist and Islamist organization, has been ruling

the Gaza Strip since 2006. It is a bitter enemy of Israel, and its main goal is to liberate Palestine to establish an Islamic state. Furthermore, Hamas enjoys the backing of Syria and Iran.

**The Oslo Accords**

The Oslo Accords were signed between the PLO and Israel in Oslo, Norway, in two phases - in 1993 and 1995. Under these agreements, both recognized each other.

**1. Oslo I (1994)**

Signed on September 13, 1994, this accord established the Palestinian Authority (PA) and outlined a five-year interim period for self-government in Gaza and the West Bank, providing Israeli withdrawal from Jericho and Gaza. It also created a joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee (JILC) to oversee implementation.

**2. Oslo II 1996**

Signed on September 28, 1995, Oslo II established an interim agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Oslo II divided the West Bank into three areas, i.e. A, B, and C, with varying degrees of Palestinian control.

**Assaults on the Gaza Strip**

After the infighting of Palestinians, particularly between Hamas, the PLO and Fatah, Israel exploited this situation and launched brutal offensives against the Gaza Strip that began in 2008 and continued in 2012, 2014 and 2023-24.

**The Abraham Accords of 2020**

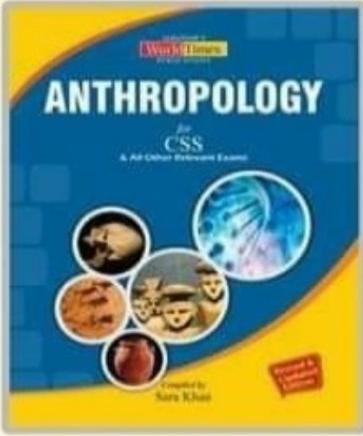
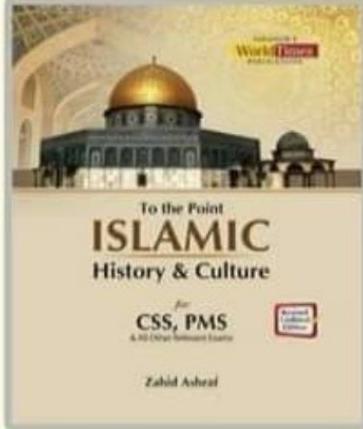
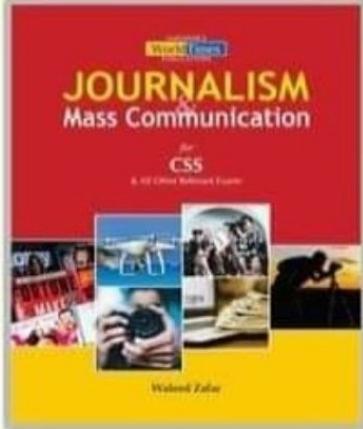
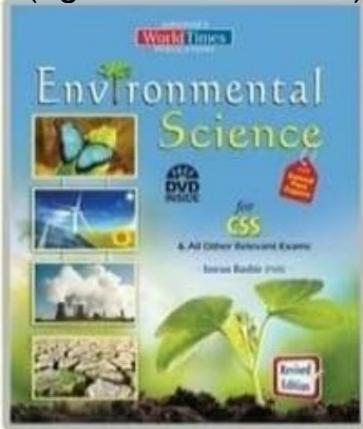
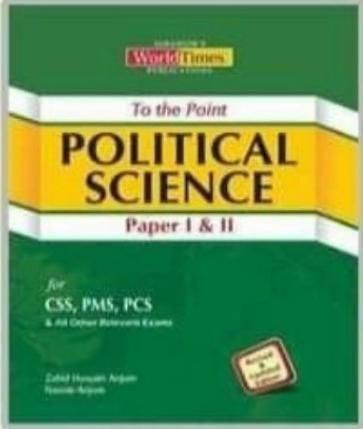
The Abraham Accords were signed at the White House between Israel, UAE and Bahrain on September 15, 2020. Under this agreement, which was brokered by US President Donald Trump, the UAE and Bahrain recognized Israel and established full diplomatic ties. It was a move that severely undermined the Palestinian cause.

**Conclusion**

The Palestine-Israel conflict is a longstanding and complex issue, rooted in a history of political and territorial disputes. From the early days of Zionist immigration to the present day, the conflict has resulted in countless human rights violations, displacement and suffering for the Palestinian people. Despite numerous attempts at peace talks and resolutions, a lasting solution is yet to be found. The recent escalation in violence and the devastating impact on Gaza highlight the urgent need for the international community to intervene and work towards a just and peaceful resolution. It is essential to recognize the legitimate rights and aspirations of Palestinians. ■

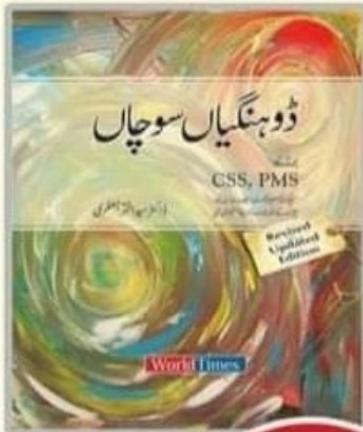
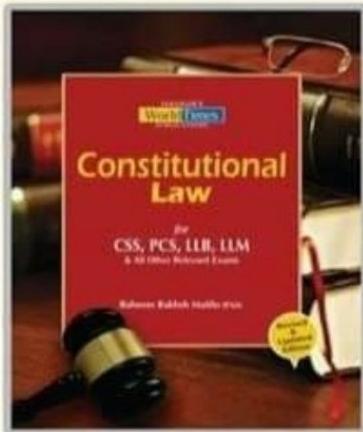
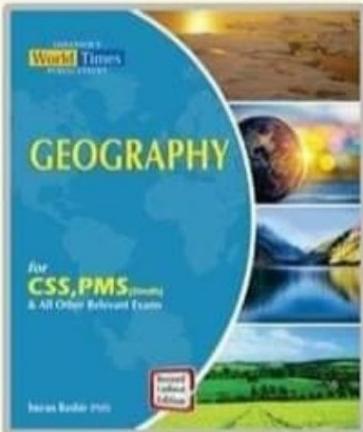
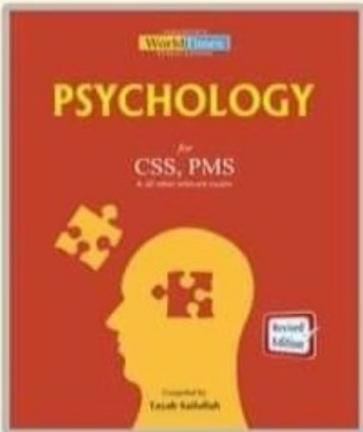
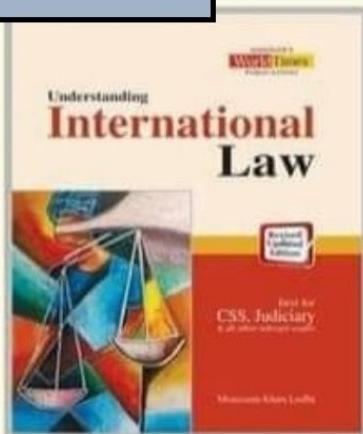
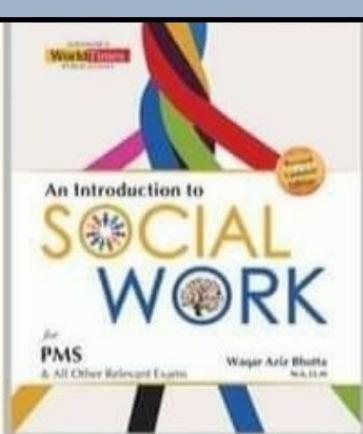
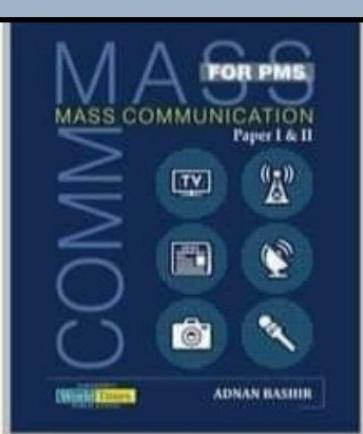
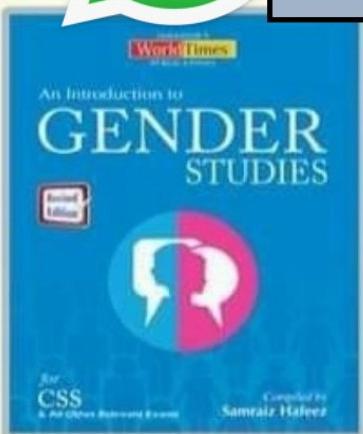
*The writer is a student of law and a CSS aspirant.*





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INTERNATIONAL

# RECOGNITION OF THE STATE OF

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A message to powerful countries

Waqr ul Hassan

The quest for Palestinian statehood has long been central to the Palestinian national struggle. Palestine has long maintained that the creation of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital is the key to stability in the Middle East region. Israeli aggression in Gaza since October 7 attacks by Hamas has revived a global push for Palestinians to be given a state of their own. And, now more and more European countries are formally recognising an independent state of Palestine. In a coordinated move that breaks with the long-held view of Western powers that Palestinians can only gain statehood as part of a negotiated peace with Israel, Spain, Ireland and Norway have formally recognised a Palestinian statehood based on the pre-1967 borders, a step that, in the words of the Prime Minister of Norway, Jonas Gahr Store, is "in support of moderate forces that are on a retreating front in a protracted and cruel conflict". He said the move is an investment in the "only solution" that can bring lasting peace in the Middle East - "two states living side by side in peace and security".

Then, on June 4, Slovenia also recognised Palestine, as the country's parliament approved the move with a majority vote. Slovenia's foreign minister said the country believes only a two-state solution can lead to a lasting peace in the Middle East and that her country "will tirelessly continue to work on the security of both nations, Palestinians and Israelis."

#### What is recognition?

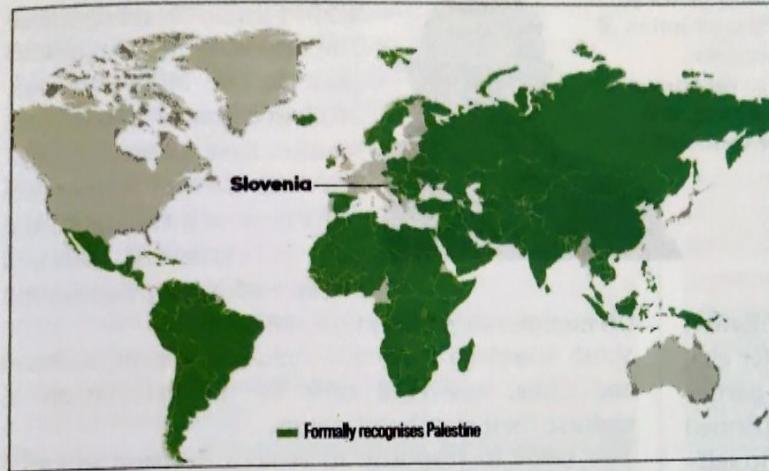
Statehood, according to The Cambridge Companion to International Law, "has long been the central organising idea in the international system". While several regions and peoples have over the years sought to declare themselves as independent states, their formal recognition depends on how the rest of the world views them.

Fulfilling a long-held Palestinian aspiration, Spain, Ireland and Norway officially recognised, on May 28, a Palestinian state, including the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, under the Palestinian National Authority with East Jerusalem as its capital, with a hope that their decision would spur other European Union countries to follow suit. Predictably, as the Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited self-rule in the West Bank under Israeli military occupation, and Hamas welcomed this development, the Israeli government lashed out by quickly withdrawing its ambassadors from Oslo, Dublin and Madrid. Palestine has been a non-member observer state of the United Nations since 2012 and is already recognised by many member states. This recognition is an important acknowledgement of the rights of the Palestinian people and their struggle towards freedom and independence and it could give the Palestinian Authority more bargaining power, particularly on an international level.

## INTERNATIONAL

## Slovenia's parliament officially recognise Palestine

Slovenia becomes the 147th UN state and the 10th EU country to recognise Palestine



There are no binding rules about when one country should recognise another, but international law provides some guidelines. The Montevideo Convention on the rights and duties of states, signed by 20 countries in North and South America in 1933, sets out four criteria: (i) a state should have a permanent population; (ii) a government; (iii) defined borders; and (iv) the capacity to enter into relations with other states. But many places recognised as states do not meet those requirements—for instance, those with two governments, such as Libya. (Recognising a state usually implies recognising its government, but in such cases, countries may choose to endorse whichever government they consider legitimate.) Some states emerge after national movements declare independence and seek international recognition.

### Palestinian quest

Recognition as a state lies at the heart of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, and to decide their political future and government. Of late, as fighting and suffering continues in Gaza, and violence grows in the West Bank, the signs of the Palestinian people gaining their own state seem in sight. Several European countries are pressing ahead with formally recognising the existence of a Palestinian state, but it must not be forgotten here that Palestine's quest for statehood is not a recent struggle; it has a history of decades. Here is a quick recap of the Palestinians' quest for statehood:

#### 1. 1917 - 1947: British mandate

Palestine was among the former Ottoman territories

placed under UK administration by the League of Nations in 1922. All of these territories eventually became fully independent states, except Palestine, where, in addition to "the rendering of administrative assistance and advice," the British Mandate incorporated the "Balfour Declaration" of 1917, expressing support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." During the Mandate, from 1922 to 1947, large-scale Jewish immigration, mainly from Eastern Europe, took place, with the numbers swelling in the 1930s with the Nazi persecution. Arab demands for independence and resistance to immigration led to a rebellion in 1937, followed by continuing terrorism and violence from both sides. The UK considered various formulas to bring independence to a land ravaged by violence. In 1947, the UK turned the Palestine problem over to the

UN.

The 1947 United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine (UNGA Resolution 181(II)) proposed the establishment of a Jewish state, an Arab state, and for the city of Jerusalem to be administered by the UN as a *corpus separatum* (separate body). This is also known as the 'two-state solution'.

Section F of the resolution said that when either of the states has become independent as envisaged in the plan, "sympathetic consideration" should be given to their application for admission to UN membership. However, Palestinian leaders rejected the Plan, which they believed went against Arab interests. The Arab-

## Canada to increase available visas for Palestinians from Gaza to 5,000

The number of available temporary resident visas for Canadians' relatives in the besieged enclave was 1,000.



## INTERNATIONAL

Israeli war broke out soon afterward, and Israel emerged as the winner. In 1949, the proposal for its UN membership was tabled, and all P5 members except the UK (which abstained) agreed.

### 2. 1971: Setting of goals

In 1971, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) declared the creation of a single democratic state in historic Palestine, inclusive of Christians, Jews and Muslims, to be its goal and the only just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hostilities

between Israel and Palestinians in 1973 were followed by Security Council Resolution 338, which, inter alia, called for peace negotiations between the parties concerned. In 1974, the General Assembly reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence, sovereignty and return. The following year, the General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and conferred on the PLO the status of observer in the Assembly and in UN conferences. Read more.

### 3. 1988: Arafat proclaims state

In 1987, a mass uprising against the Israeli occupation began in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the intifada). Methods used by the Israeli forces resulted in mass injuries and heavy loss of life among the civilian Palestinian population. So, on November 15, 1988, during the first Palestinian intifada, or uprising, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat unilaterally proclaimed an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. He made the announcement in Algiers, at a meeting of the exiled Palestinian National Council, which adopted the two-state solution as a goal, with independent Israeli and Palestinian states existing side-by-side.

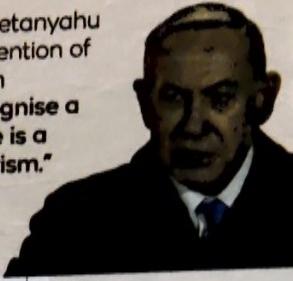
Minutes later, Algeria became the first country to officially recognise an independent Palestinian state.

Pakistan then recognized the Palestinian Authority on 16 November 1988 and had established full diplomatic relations with it by the end of

### What is Israel's response?

Israel, which rejects any move to legitimise Palestinian statehood internationally, reacted rapidly by recalling its ambassadors to Ireland, Norway and Spain.

Prime Minister Netanyahu said that "the intention of several European countries to recognise a Palestinian state is a reward for terrorism."



1989.

Within weeks, dozens of other countries, including much of the Arab world, India, Turkiye, most of Africa and several central and eastern European countries followed suit.

### 3. 2011-2012: UN recognition

The next wave of recognitions came in late 2010 and early 2011, at a time of crisis for the Middle East peace process. This was the time when peace talks were at a standstill, and the Palestinians pushed ahead with a campaign for full

UN membership for a state of Palestine.

South American countries, including Argentina, Brazil and Chile, answered calls by the Palestinians to endorse their statehood claims.

This came in response to Israel's decision to end a temporary ban on Jewish-settlement building in the occupied West Bank.

The quest failed, but, in a groundbreaking move on October 31 of that year, the UN cultural agency UNESCO voted to accept the Palestinians as a full member. In response, Israel and the United States suspended their funding of the body. (They quit UNESCO outright in 2018, although the United States re-joined last year.)

In November 2012, the Palestinian flag was raised for the first time at the United Nations in New York after the General Assembly overwhelmingly voted to upgrade the status of the Palestinians to "non-member observer state".

Three years later, the International Criminal Court also accepted Palestine as a state party.

### 4. 2014: Sweden first in western Europe

In 2014, Sweden, which has a large Palestinian community, became the first EU member in western Europe to recognise a Palestinian state.

A state of Palestine had earlier been recognised by six other European countries - Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania. Israel reacted angrily to Stockholm's move, with then foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman telling the Swedes that "relations in the Middle

### Why does it matter?

Although EU countries and Norway only recognise the possibility of a Palestinian state, this symbolism will strengthen the international position of the Palestinians and put more pressure on Israel to start negotiations to end the war.



**INTERNATIONAL**

East are a lot more complex than the self-assembly furniture of IKEA".

**5. 2024: New push in Europe**

Israel's relentless offensive in Gaza since October 7 last year has boosted support in Europe for Palestinian statehood.

After months of warnings, Norway, Spain and Ireland have finally taken the step, with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez describing it as a matter of "historic justice." Moreover, Slovenia's parliament has also voted for the recognition that "sends hope to the Palestinian people".

Malta and Australia have also floated the possibility of endorsing Palestinian statehood. In addition, French President Emmanuel Macron has said he would be prepared to recognise a Palestinian state, but such a move should "come at a useful moment" and not be based on "emotion".

**Major issues in Palestinian statehood****a. Israeli occupation**

One major obstacle to Palestinian statehood is the ongoing Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel maintains control over these territories, which Palestinians see as their future state.

**b. Peace process failure**

The Oslo Accords in the 1990s aimed to establish a framework for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and achieving Palestinian statehood through negotiations. However, progress has been slow, and the peace process has faced numerous setbacks.

**c. Expansion of Israeli settlements**

The expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank has been a significant roadblock to the creation of a contiguous Palestinian state. These settlements are considered illegal under international law and have been a major point of contention in peace negotiations.

**d. Other challenges and obstacles**

Other significant challenges, including security concerns, disputes over borders and sovereignty, the status of Palestinian refugees, and the status of Jerusalem, which is claimed by both Israelis and Palestinians as their capital.

**Present Recognition Status**

As of June 4, 2024, around 147 of the 193 United Nations member states have recognized Palestine as a state. However, notable countries like the United States, Canada and some European nations have not formally recognized it.

**Will there be a domino effect in Europe?**

The almost simultaneous decisions by two European Union countries and Norway, may generate momentum for the recognition of a Palestinian state by other EU countries and could spur further steps at the United Nations, deepening Israel's isolation.

Previously, seven members of the 27-nation European Union officially recognized a Palestinian state. Five of them are former East Bloc countries that announced recognition in 1988, as did Cyprus, before joining the bloc. Sweden's recognition came in 2014.

**Implications of recognition**

While dozens of countries have recognized a Palestinian state, none of the major Western powers have done so, and it is unclear how much of a difference the move by the three countries might make.

Even so, their recognition would mark a significant accomplishment for the Palestinians, who believe it confers international legitimacy on their struggle. Little would likely change on the ground in the short term. Peace talks are stalled, and Israel's hardline government has dug its heels in against Palestinian statehood.

**Conclusion**

In the midst of unspeakable tragedy, hope remains for a better tomorrow for the Palestinian people. As Israel continues its genocidal campaign in Gaza, unfazed by global censure and warnings from international courts to stop its monstrous campaign, there is growing consensus within the comity of nations that legal recognition must be extended to Palestine as a sovereign state. However, recognition of Palestine is only the first step. The need is for the international community to endorse an immediate, unconditional ceasefire in Gaza. Unhindered humanitarian aid must simultaneously be made available to the occupied territory's traumatised population. At a later date, the comity of nations must hold Israel and its backers to account for the murderous rampage Gaza has been subjected to. □

*The writer is a member of staff.*

**What are the implications?**

Many countries have recognised a Palestinian state, but no major Western power has done so.

While the impact of the three countries' recognition is unclear, it would be a significant achievement for the Palestinians, as it would grant further international legitimacy to their struggle.



## INTERNATIONAL

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**T**he level of barbarity the world saw in Rafah from the recent Israeli airstrikes has generated a psychological shockwave across the globe. Although such horrific incidents have been happening in history, e.g. during Adolf Hitler's era, those incidents, which happened without the use of modern technology, those are still mourned, condemned and criticized. On the contrary, we see no condemnation, criticism or mourning by Western countries and their media over the genocide being carried out in Palestine today.

Here, it seems apt to understand the background and dynamics of the genocide of Palestinians and who has supported it in the past.

Prior to World War I, a narrative started building up that Jews were a minority in Germany and that they should have a separate land to protect their identity. This narrative gained momentum after World War II when Adolf Hitler initiated the genocide of Jews behind the gates of several concentration camps, which were set up to torture and kill them. There are several horrific stories of concentration camps, specifically Auschwitz - the biggest of all such camps - where humans were burned alive or thrown into boiling furnaces. On several occasions, Hitler said Jews were not humans and, hence, did not deserve to live.

The narrative that had been building up since the beginning of WWI finally materialized into the idea that Jews should be given a separate land to preserve

Muslims, who were spreading across the world, especially the Middle East.

Several manipulations were carried out by the British, as seen in the Indian Subcontinent as well. The separation of India and Pakistan was justified by the British as being based on Hindu-Muslim riots, which were not so ubiquitous before their arrival, and the same people who had been living in peace were divided, with Kashmir becoming a lifelong conflict between the two newly-formed nations. Bangladesh was initially given to Pakistan as an integral part, sandwiching India between East and West Pakistan, in order to keep the area in turmoil and prevent the two nations from becoming good friends and neighbours. On the other side of the map, the sudden rise of conflicts in the Middle East against the Ottoman Empire, the meteoric rise of the Saudi family in the Middle East and riots in Egypt against the Ottoman Empire were fuelled by a vision - presented by the British - of making them separate nations with their own lands. Most importantly, after all these cartographic shenanigans, the British government presented partition plans that effectively dismantled the Ottoman Empire into several separate states. India and Pakistan were also bifurcated, with seeds of a long-term conflict over Kashmir sown, while the British still named themselves Great Britain. Indeed, these were all strategic moves. However, the greatest stroke by the British was yet to be seen by the world,

Abdul Basit Memon  
their identity and community on humanitarian grounds. This narrative was floated, matured and implemented by the British government. However, it is essential to understand why only Jews were considered a minority and a special human race. There were several other communities in Africa that were also tortured, enslaved and butchered by influential US and British people. The logic behind choosing Jews as a minority and giving them a separate land to flourish was a long-term strategy to dismantle the rising power of the Ottoman Empire and the

which was ensuring that Muslims could not unite as a global community to threaten the monopoly of the British power.

This master stroke was to place Jews in the area of Canaan (known as Palestine today), because the British had well researched and learned that historically, Muslims' relations with Jews had always remained strained. The last war between Jews and Muslims was the Battle of Khaybar, which was won by Muslims, but their mutual animosity and hatred for each other would keep them engaged in conflicts, ensuring that the Middle East will remain an area of turbulence forever. To settle these issues, Muslims would turn to the British, who could easily control them. The same divide-and-rule strategy was applied in the case of the Indian Subcontinent. The points of contention in the Middle East - in the form of Israel - and in Subcontinent - Kashmir - were strategically placed to provoke Muslim sentiments intermittently, as and when required. In the partition plan, 52% of the land was allocated to Jews and 48% to the native Arabs residing in Palestine. Control of Jerusalem was given to the British and later handed over to the USA. Since Jerusalem was an important city for all three religions - Islam, for Al Aqsa Mosque; Christianity, for the oldest

church and Judaism, for the Western Wall (the Wailing Wall), such partition was, and still is, considered an ideal example of a divide-and-rule strategy. Later, when the control was handed over to the USA, the importance of such manipulated geography was well understood by Americans. They exploited these demarcations to their advantage, supporting the Jews after the creation of Israel. Several Arab-Israeli wars and Intifadas were fought over territorial issues, but nothing auspicious happened for the Arabs, as Israel was supported by the superpower in terms of technology, weaponry, banking systems and much more.

The displacement or sidelining of native Palestinian people into the Gaza Strip was preplanned, as the area directly connects to international waters and ports. This opportunity to control the area was kept as a

reserve strategy to be utilized in times of need. Currently, the USA is manipulating this reserve strategy for several reasons, including containing China's influence in the Middle East by creating turbulence in the region, undermining China's rising economy, testing the strength and unity of Muslim countries, demonstrating power dynamics in the region and transforming the Gaza Strip into an international port area as a new economic hub to support the struggling US economy via Israel. For the USA, the native Palestinians are a useless human race, occupying the most important area in the region, which could be converted into the greatest economic hub. Iran attempted to oppose the massacre/genocide, and the USA allegedly demonstrated its power through the mysterious death of the Iranian

President, which has served as a warning to all world leaders.

There is a dire need to understand the motives and logic behind the ongoing genocide in Palestine. The area is strategically being isolated from all corners (Gaza-Rafah), and it will later be isolated from the center as well, and control over Palestine will be announced. Merely supporting Palestine and engaging in social media campaigns like "All Eyes on Rafah" will yield no fruitful

results, as the entire technology, media, banking systems and other major economic activities of the world are controlled by the USA, which is supporting the genocide for its own economic benefit. There is no end to this genocide in sight, and ethnic cleansing will continue unless Muslim countries join hands to resist this. Still, a thought-provoking question arises: Are we drifting towards World War III? The answer is absolutely not, as each country is focused on growing its own economy amidst a worldwide recession. All eyes are shut in sweet slumber, and ears are gently closed to the Palestinian genocide, including those of the economic powers like China and Russia. □

*An MSc in Public Administration, the writer is a government employee. He is interested in history and current affairs.*

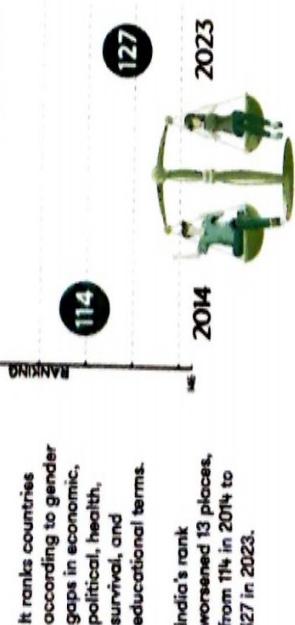
### Israeli army to give more weapons to illegal settlers in occupied West Bank: Report



**IN CHARTS:****WHAT GLOBAL INDICES SAY ABOUT MODI'S DECADE-LONG REIGN IN INDIA****GLOBAL GENDER GAP INDEX,  
BY WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM**

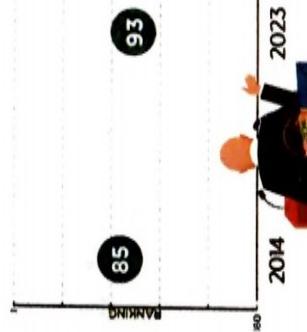
The index tracks national progress on gender parity in 145 countries.

It ranks countries according to gender gaps in economic, political, health, survival, and educational terms.

**GLOBAL CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX,  
BY TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL**

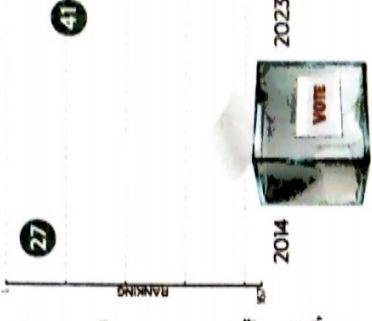
The index monitors corruption in public sectors around 180 countries of the world.

India's rank went down eight places, from 85 in 2014 to 93 in 2023.

**DEMOCRACY INDEX, BY THE ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT**

The benchmark monitors civil liberties, pluralism, political culture and participation, and electoral process in 167 countries.

India's rank dropped from 27 in 2014 to 41 in 2023, the latest year for which data is available.

**RULE OF LAW INDEX,  
BY WORLD JUSTICE PRO**

The benchmark monitors criminal and civil justice systems, fundamental rights, constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, transparent government, order and security, and regulatory enforcement.

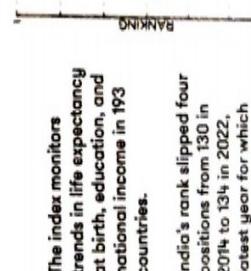
The global ranking is based on 130,000 household surveys and 4,000 expert surveys in 112 countries.

India's rank dropped from 59 in 2015 to 79 in 2023, losing 20 places in eight years.

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX,  
BY THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

The index monitors trends in life expectancy at birth, education, and national income in 193 countries.

India's rank slipped four positions from 130 in 2014 to 134 in 2022, latest year for which data is available.

**WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX,  
BY REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS**

The benchmark monitors media independence, pluralism, self-censorship, abuses, and transparency in 180 countries.

India lost 19 positions in the last decade as its ranking worsened from 140 in 2014 to 159 in 2024.

India's media has fallen into an "unofficial state of emergency" since Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, the journalists' body says, noting that the media become a "privilege of Hindu men from upper castes" that creates a bias with repercussions on the angles and subjects of news coverage.



## INTERNATIONAL

Narendra Damodardas Modi, who has been recently sworn in as the Prime Minister of India for a third term, has emerged as a powerful leader in the politics and government of this South Asian country, especially in its recent political history. However, this time he is not commanding a strong majority in the parliament, as his alliance lost a considerable number of seats in this year's election. This makes it evidently clear that the Indian people's trust in this demagogue leader has eroded a lot. The reason for this waning trust is the relentless propagation by Modi and his political party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), that India will revive, rejuvenate and reinvigorate its historical cultural legacy. To make people believe that he is going to achieve this goal, Modi, during his previous two terms as PM, resorted to actual and symbolic violence. To perpetuate his Hindutva-obsessed rule in a so-called 'secular' India, he has fostered a fascist culture of oppression and polarization. He suppressed independent media, targeted civil freedoms and blatantly violated the constitutional rights of minorities in this most populous nation in the world. However, he has also made significant efforts to spur economic growth and development. In terms of foreign policy, he was successful in drawing attention to his catchphrase, which presents India as a global leader or "vishwaguru." A look at his two previous stints in power raises in every mind a question: what lies in his third term? Let's create a future prognosis on that by analyzing his previous policy pursuits.

**Socio-political policy**

Modi's previous tenures have been tainted with a narrow-minded emphasis on hyper-nationalism and religious bigotry. For example, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019, sparked controversy and led to widening identity and religious cleavages. The act resulted in widespread protests and agitations across India. Most independent critics perceived this as a highly discriminatory move against Muslims, who constitute a sizeable minority in this South Asian country. This move not only put a question mark on the secularist character of India but also undermined its political culture, which rests on democracy. Similarly, social polarization increased further when the Modi government tried to curb freedom of speech. Even international media houses saw this in a highly sceptical manner. For example, growing uncertainties about media freedoms were highlighted by the arrest of journalist Siddique Kappan, who was arrested in 2020 while travelling to report on the Hathras gang-rape case. Invoking

Iqra Riaz Ud Din  
sedition laws and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) to suppress dissent has also been subject to significant condemnation. Moreover, the Modi government has come under severe denunciation for using several tactics to sabotage democratic processes, such as manipulating electoral bonds to provide hidden political money and using state apparatus for electoral advantages. Also, the revocation of Article 370 regarding the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 was followed by extended internet outages in the occupied valley, and a strong

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military presence emphasized the fascist tendencies of Modi, his government and party policy. The outrage of Sikh farmers against the agricultural laws also evidences rampant social fragmentation. These authoritative strategies have been denounced by international human rights organizations as an infringement of fundamental freedoms and rights of the people. These fascist policies made Modi lose big in Ayodhya, despite the fact that, in order to attract Hindu votes, he constructed a new Hindu temple - The Ram Mandir - on the site where the once-fabled Babri Masjid stood. Some Indian analysts argue that India needs to adopt a consensus-based approach to meet the requirements of its heterogeneous population. In his third term as PM of India, Modi has to restrain from his hard-line approach and rely on a more balanced one if his coalition government is to sustain. There are fewer chances that 'the Butcher of Gujarat' (as Modi was once known) would be able to reassert his fascist policies this time because his government is standing on the crutches of his allies, and the opposition party, the Indian National Congress (INC), has re-emerged with strong electoral numbers.

**Economic policy**

In the realm of the economy, it is highly likely that the Modi government will continue with its focus on economic growth and development by enhancing infrastructure: airports, railways and roads, and creating a favourable business environment. This is evident from the statistics, which show that the real GDP growth rate of the Indian economy sustained at around 7.0% and the nominal GDP remained at 9.6%, positioning India as the world's fifth-largest economy in the fiscal year 2022-23. The previous governments of Modi took major initiatives, i.e. the 'Make in India' campaign, which was aimed at turning the Indian economy into a hub of global manufacturing. Moreover, the 'Digital India' program was also initiated to transform India into a digitally empowered country. These projects would continue in his third term. Similarly, the government would increase its policy initiatives to liberalize foreign direct investment (FDI). India is a favourite destination of international investment giants, consultants and trading partners as it is the fastest-growing, innovative economy. India's FDI inflows remain robust in the

fiscal year 2022-23, totalling around USD 84.8 billion, with significant investments in the technology, telecom and renewable energy sectors. The reforms introduced by the Modi government yielded positive results as the ease of doing business ranking of India improved. However, the Indian economy faced serious challenges concerning unemployment, poverty, high population growth, etc. India's unemployment rate was estimated at 8% in the fiscal year 2022-23. On the other hand, according to the statistics provided by the World Bank (WB), Modi's government successfully reduced extreme poverty - from around 18.7% in 2015 to 12.9% in the year 2021. Still, the outcomes are not equitably distributed in Indian society.

**Foreign policy**

In the foreign policy domain, Modi's third term would continue to harbour his agenda of getting recognition as a powerful global leader. India emphasized its strategic alignments with the United States (US), Japan, the European Union (EU) and Australia.

Particularly, India prized its strong strategic consistency with the Indo-Pacific region and its strong emphasis on the success of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) to counter the influence of China. In order to resist China's strong influence in the region, this coalition is essential for India. This dedication is demonstrated by India's involvement in cooperative military drills like the Malabar Naval Exercise. The growing cooperation among the Quad members on infrastructure, security and vaccine distribution emphasizes India's strategic shift to multilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. The Quad's prominence on freedom, openness and inclusivity is consistent with India's larger strategic objectives. In Modi's third term, it is anticipated that the US-Indian relationship will continue to grow. The two nations have aligned objectives in defence, counterterrorism and economic relations, among other areas. The increasing defence cooperation is demonstrated by the signing of agreements such as the BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement) in 2020. India is expected to play a bigger role in US-India defence cooperation, cooperative military drills and defence-related commerce. This strategic alliance will be strengthened by the continuation of programs like the 2+2 Dialogue. Also, India is



## INTERNATIONAL

well-positioned to expand its connections with the EU and individual European nations. The strategic alliance between the EU and India, which highlights investment, commerce and climate change, will be essential. This increasing connection is exemplified by the resumption of discussions on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement and cooperation on global issues such as cybersecurity and climate change. The focus of Modi's third term would be on strengthening technological and economic collaboration with Europe. The most interesting phenomenon that occurred in Modi's previous tenures is his engagement with the Muslim world in the Middle East; however, Modi is quite resentful of his Muslim population at home, which shows his realistic pragmatism. For example, Modi paid a visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2015, becoming the first Indian prime minister in 35 years to do so. Consequently, a number of agreements on commercial, defence and security cooperation were signed. The Order of Zayed, the highest civilian accolade in the UAE, was conferred on Modi in 2019. Another important turning point in the history of India-UAE relations was the opening of a huge Hindu temple in the UAE, which put emphasis on the strengthening of diplomatic and cultural links between the two nations. Furthermore, Modi's trips to Saudi Arabia in 2016 and 2019 improved the country's strategic and economic clout even more. Agreements on energy cooperation and investment were struck by the two nations. This growing partnership is highlighted by Saudi Aramco's substantial investment in India's petrochemical and oil industries. The highest civilian honour in Saudi Arabia, the Order of King Abdulaziz Al-Saud, was conferred on Modi in 2019. Strategic alliances with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are also expected to be crucial because of the huge Indian diaspora, trade and energy security. The goal would be to fortify relations with Israel, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, employing more bilateral visits, trade deals and defence cooperation. On the other hand, the India-China relationship would remain intricate and complex, particularly given the intermittent border skirmishes and economic rivalry. It is anticipated that the Modi government will continue to uphold territorial integrity while looking for opportunities for diplomatic interaction. Indo-Chinese relations have been strained since the 2020 conflict in the Galwan Valley and the ensuing military standoffs. To reduce hostilities, both nations have resumed their diplomatic and military parleys. Regarding Pakistan,

Modi has always adopted a belligerent stance to win the hearts of the people of India, as he excessively used anti-Pakistan rhetoric during his election campaigns. The confrontational moves of Modi are evident from the Balakot incident of 2019 - where Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was arrested by Pakistan's Air Force. This incident not only violated international law but also proved to be an embarrassment for Modi, though the then Pakistani government, as a gesture of peacemaking, returned the captured officer. Similarly, the much-hyped 'surgical strike' of Uri in 2016 was a mere pomp and show by the Indian government to boost the image of Modi. Also, the revocation of Article 370 is strongly condemned by Pakistan as a blatant violation of UN resolutions. This scenario suggests that there are fewer chances of resuming talks between the two nuclear states in the near future.



## Conclusion

In his new term, Modi will focus on the continuation of the previous policies, but he will need to adopt a flexible approach concerning socio-political matters. Modi would focus on foreign strategic partnerships, regional diplomacy and recreating alliances. To maintain the coalition government, Modi has to navigate multifaceted socio-political and economic challenges. The policy goals of his government and the implementation of those goals would ascertain his political future and party position. Nevertheless, the dwindling electoral trust in the BJP is an indication of the emergence of an old phenomenon in India, i.e. the resurgence of the INC, which once again ignited the hues of dynastical politics in India. ■

*The writer is an Mphil scholar and Data Science enthusiast.*

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# China's REJUVENATION Dream

**C**hina's aspiration for rejuvenation encompasses a national vision and political objective, articulated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to regain the country's historical eminence as a leading global force. This aspiration, prominently advocated by President Xi Jinping, is encapsulated in the "Chinese Dream" of national revival. It encompasses various strategic goals and initiatives aimed at revitalizing the country's economic, military, cultural and technological strengths. The overarching aim is to reclaim the influence and status China once held, countering the period known as the "Century of Humiliation" when China was dominated by foreign powers. The rejuvenation is perceived as a process of national strengthening and modernization, positioning China to play a dominant role in global affairs and ensure prosperity and

Junaid Jessar

stability for its people. This multi-dimensional approach not only seeks to enhance China's internal development but also to extend its influence globally, aligning with the long-term objectives of the CCP.

#### Key Aspects of Rebirth

Chinese authorities assert that national rejuvenation and modernization are the dreams that the Chinese people have always striven for since modern times began. Now, China's national rejuvenation has become a historical inevitability and the Chinese path to modernization is the bright path to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

#### a. Taiwan's status

Taiwan remains a crucial component of China's efforts towards revival.

The CCP regards Taiwan as an integral part of China and is committed to reunifying the island with the mainland, even if by force. However, Taiwan maintains

**China's rejuvenation, often referred to as the "Chinese Dream," is a multifaceted and ambitious vision articulated by President Xi Jinping. It is aimed at the revitalization of the nation, both domestically and internationally, and transforming into a global leader in various domains. It encompasses economic growth, technological innovation, social development, cultural revival, environmental sustainability and enhanced global influence. While the vision promises significant benefits for China and the world, it also necessitates addressing internal challenges and navigating complex international dynamics. In the following write-up, the writer has highlighted several factors that are making this dream come true.**

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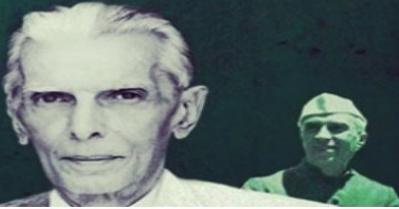
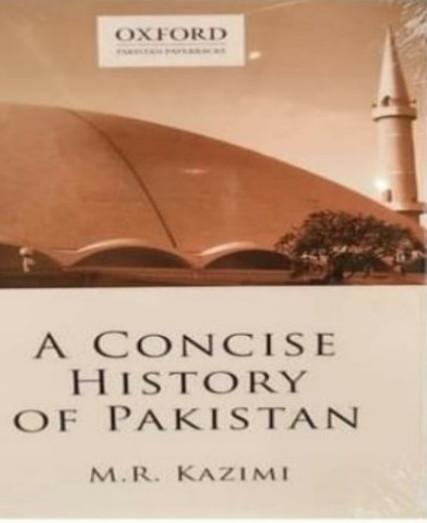
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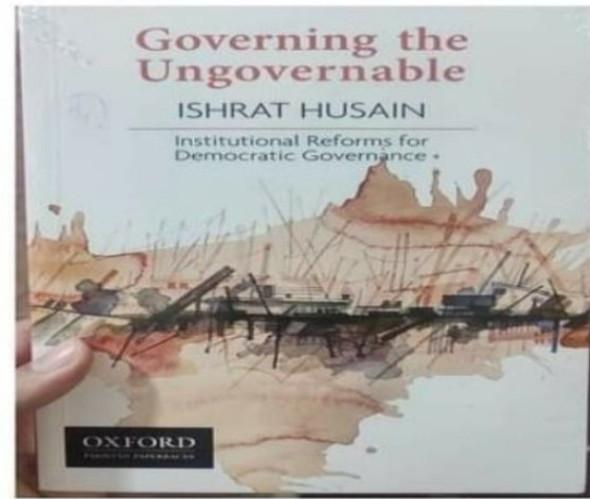
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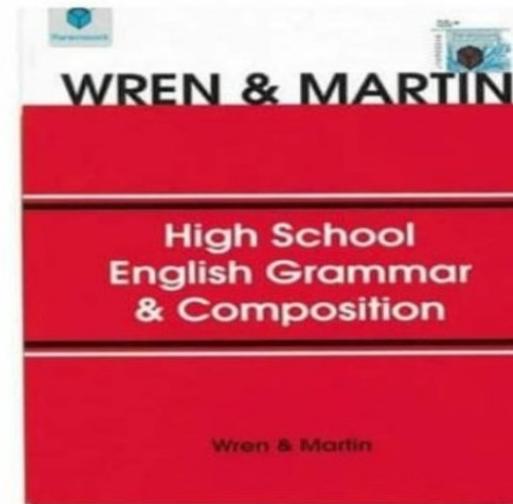
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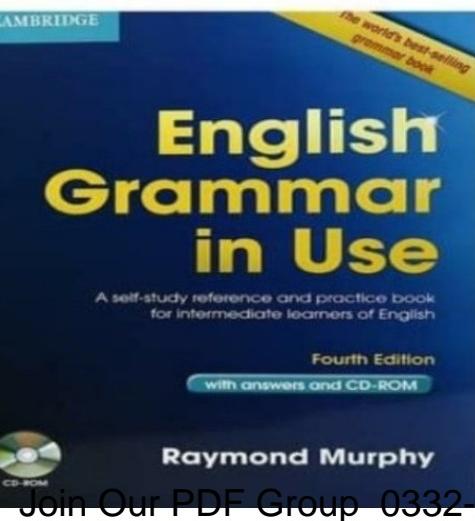
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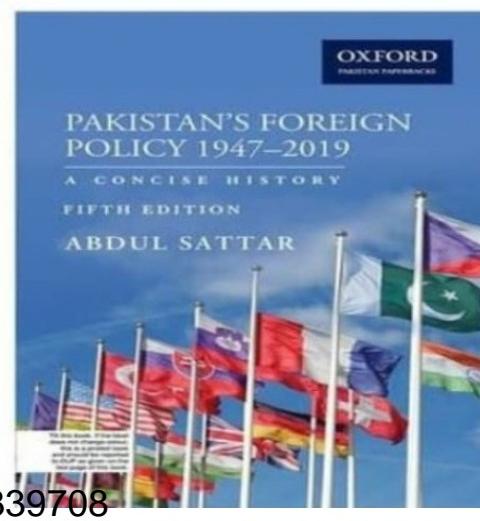
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its own democratic governance and sees itself as a sovereign nation. Ongoing tensions between the two sides, punctuated by occasional escalations in rhetoric and military maneuvers, persist. China's revival strategy involves diplomatic, economic and military measures to internationally isolate Taiwan and pressure it into accepting reunification on Beijing's terms. Nevertheless, Taiwan's robust democracy, strong economy and support from key allies complicate China's peaceful reunification efforts.

**b. Economic expansion and innovation**

A fundamental element of China's rejuvenation is fostering continuous economic growth and technological innovation. At the core of this endeavor lies the

industries like robotics, aerospace and biotechnology. This initiative aims to reduce China's dependence on foreign technology and elevate its industrial capabilities, thereby fostering domestic technological advancements and innovation to attain global leadership in critical sectors. Xi Jinping went on to argue in his book *The Governance of China*: "The realization of the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation depends fundamentally on a solid material and technological foundation, which can only be built through sustaining economic development."

**c. Modernization of the military**

China is heavily investing in military modernization to bolster its defense capabilities and assert its strategic

**"1 Direction, 5 Features and 5 Principles"****Direction**

There is one clear direction set out for the Chinese path to modernization. China has adopted a two-step strategic plan.

**1. To realize socialist modernization from 2020 through 2035,**

**2. To build China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful from 2035 through the middle of this century.**

By the year 2035, China will significantly increase its economic strength, scientific and technological capabilities and composite national strength, join the ranks of the world's most innovative countries with great self-reliance and strength in science and technology, build a modernized economy, form a new pattern of development, improve the system for whole-process people's democracy and make more notable and substantive progress in promoting the people's well-rounded development and prosperity for all. These are China's overall development objectives for the year 2035 given by President Xi Jinping.

**Features**

The Chinese path to modernization is characterized by five distinctive features that are unique to the Chinese context.

- 1. China is working to achieve modernization for more than 1.4 billion people.**
- 2. The modernization of common prosperity for all.**
- 3. The modernization of material and cultural-ethical advancement.**
- 4. The modernization of harmony between humanity and nature.**
- 5. The modernization of peaceful development – China will never seek hegemony, and its development strengthens the world's forces for peace.**

**Principles**

- 1. Upholding and strengthening the Party's overall leadership**
- 2. Following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics**
- 3. Applying a people-centered development philosophy**
- 4. Remaining committed to deepening reform and opening up**
- 5. Carrying forward China's fighting spirit.**

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), an extensive infrastructure and economic development scheme intended to boost trade and investment ties between China and nations across Asia, Africa and Europe. The initiative aims not only to create new economic prospects but also to extend China's geopolitical influence by establishing new markets for Chinese goods and services and facilitating smoother trade routes. The BRI encompasses investments in various sectors such as railways, ports, highways and digital infrastructure, making it one of the most ambitious development projects globally. Another pivotal aspect is the "Made in China 2025" strategy, which seeks to overhaul Chinese manufacturing by promoting high-tech

interests. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is undergoing significant transformations, emphasizing the integration of advanced technologies, cyber capabilities and enhanced force projection. This modernization endeavor includes expanding naval capabilities to safeguard maritime interests and assert territorial claims, particularly in the disputed South China Sea. The PLA's modernization program involves upgrading military equipment, improving training and readiness and developing new doctrines tailored to modern warfare, aiming to deter potential adversaries and safeguard China's growing global interests.

**d. Advancements in Technology**

In the technological realm, China aims to lead globally,

## INTERNATIONAL

particularly in artificial intelligence (AI). By 2030, China seeks to become the world leader in AI through substantial investments in research, development and practical applications of AI technology. The government is fostering AI development through policies, funding for research institutions and collaborations with private enterprises. Additionally, China's ambitions in space exploration are progressing with projects such as lunar missions, Mars exploration and the development of a Chinese space station, showcasing its burgeoning prowess in space technology. These initiatives not only seek scientific discoveries but also aim to bolster national pride and demonstrate China's technological capabilities internationally.

**e. Cultural revival**

*"China's rise would be characterized by a resurgence of traditional cultural values and norms."* — (Samuel P. Huntington: The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order)

China's revival efforts also entail a cultural renaissance to promote traditional Chinese culture and values both domestically and internationally. This includes endeavors to enhance China's soft power through cultural exchanges, a stronger media presence and the global dissemination of Confucius Institutes. By emphasizing its rich cultural heritage, China aims to cultivate a positive global image and influence international perceptions. Domestically, this cultural revival seeks to strengthen national identity and unity, bolstering the legitimacy of the CCP and societal cohesion essential for realizing broader objectives. Efforts include promoting traditional festivals, arts, literature, philosophy and integrating cultural education into the national curriculum.

**f. Global leadership**

China is increasingly positioning itself as a global leader through active participation in international organizations and the establishment of new institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). The AIIB, for instance, provides financial support for infrastructure projects across Asia, promoting development and augmenting China's influence in the region. Furthermore, China is making significant commitments to tackle climate change, pledging to reduce carbon emissions and invest in renewable energy, thereby positioning itself as a leader in global climate governance. China's active involvement in international diplomacy and trade agreements reinforces its role as a key player on the world stage, advocating for multilateralism and cooperation.

**Obstacles and Criticism**

China's rejuvenation encounters various formidable challenges and criticisms. Economically, the country must navigate structural issues and debt concerns that could hinder sustained growth. High levels of local government debt and the necessity for ongoing economic reforms pose significant risks. Internationally, China faces geopolitical tensions, particularly with the United States and neighboring nations, over trade disputes, human rights issues and territorial disputes. Instances such as the trade war with the United States and tensions in the South China Sea illustrate the complexities China faces on the global stage. Domestically, social inequality, an aging population, and potential internal dissent pose threats to stability and the achievement of rejuvenation objectives. Addressing these internal challenges necessitates prudent management of economic and social policies to ensure inclusivity and stability.

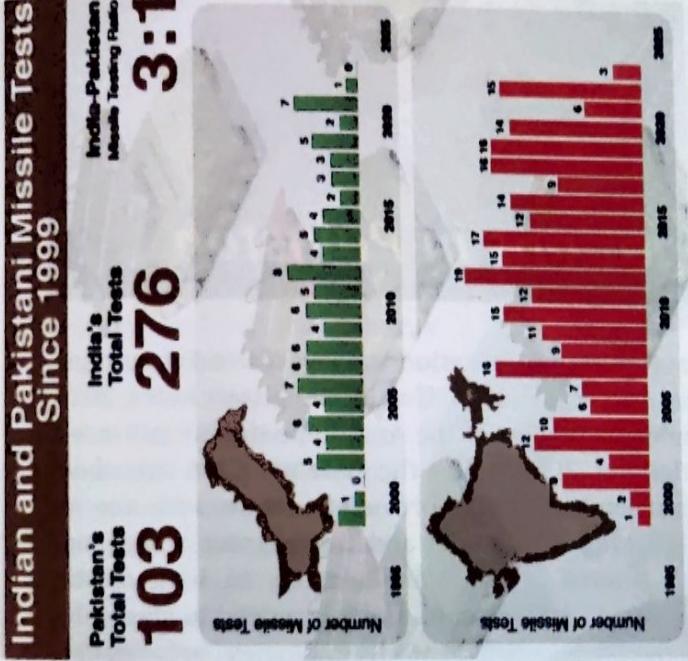
**Conclusion**

China's rejuvenation embodies a comprehensive and ambitious strategy aimed at reinstating its historical eminence on the global stage. It involves concerted efforts across economic, military, technological, cultural and political spheres. While these endeavors promise transformative change, they also present significant internal and external challenges that will shape China's trajectory in the decades to come. The success of China's rejuvenation hinges on its ability to navigate these complexities and sustain momentum towards realizing its vision. Ultimately, China's rejuvenation is not only about reclaiming past glory but also about forging a future where it stands as a central and respected power in the global community.

The writer holds an MA Economics degree and is a CSS aspirant



**China must unify and is bound to unify. This is the final conclusion from 70 years of cross-Straits development and is a necessary requirement for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the new era.**

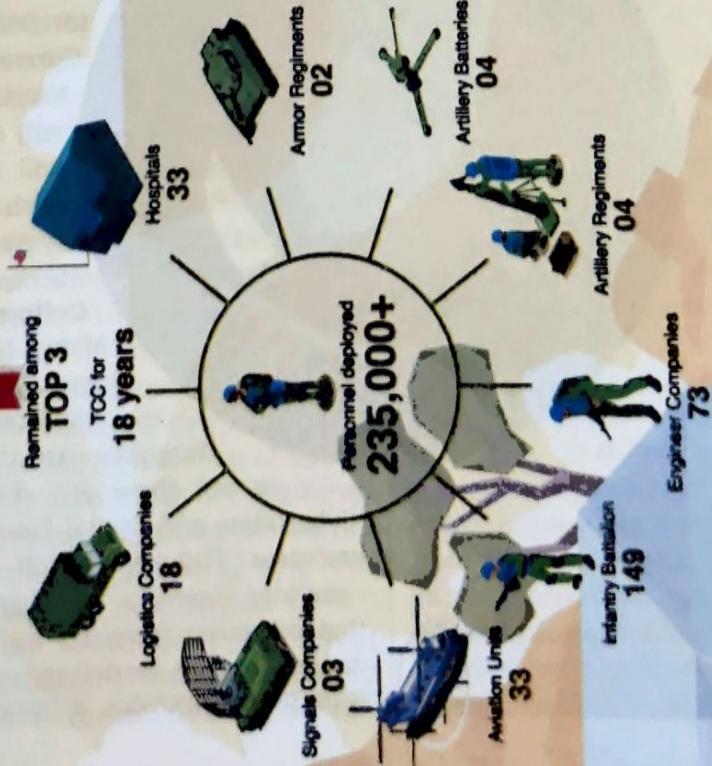


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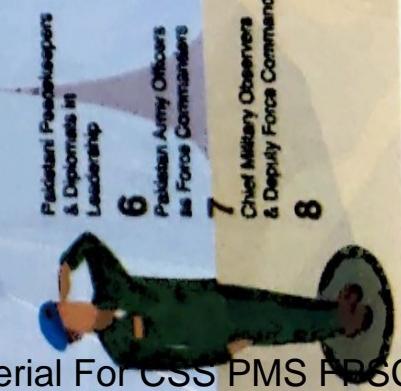
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# DIGITAL FORENSICS



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### The conspectus

The law and sociology grow in tandem, with the former following the latter. In this evolution of the two disciplines, criminology, the subset of sociology, is further branching off. A new discipline named digital criminology is emerging. Professor Anastasia Powell, in her book (*Digital Criminology*), co-authored with Gregory Stratton and Robin Cameron, defined digital criminology as an 'intersection of critical, cultural and socio-technical theory and research'. Likewise, the law is responding to technology, especially artificial intelligence, through legislative and administrative measures. On 15th December 2023, the European Artificial Intelligence Act was passed by the European Parliament. Similarly, in Pakistan, the Computer Emergency Response Team Rules, 2023 (CERT Rules) under Section 49 read with Section 51 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (PECA) were passed. On the data scene, the draft data protection law by the Ministry of Information Technology has been prepared and is pending consideration for legislation. In policing, the data analytics will be used proactively, as many new pieces of legislation contain provisions for

data collection, retention and lawful use. For example, the Anti-Rape (Sex Offenders Register) Rules, 2023, under Section 24 of the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021, oblige the state to collect data about sex offenders. Similar provisions are available now for trafficking in persons and for migrant smuggling-related offences in Pakistan. In light of this background, there is a need to study how different technologies are shaping state and law-enforcement responses. One area of particular interest is the use of digital forensics in criminal prosecutions. The instant write-up will explore the concept and will analyze its integration with the criminal justice system, along with some recommendations.

### Defining digital forensics

Many terms are used interchangeably, like computer forensics, electronic forensics and digital forensics. Are these terms synonymous or are there any differences. In his book, 'Cybercrime and Digital Forensics: An Introduction', Professor Thomas J. Holt distinguished between computer forensics and digital forensics. He noted that computer forensics has now transformed into digital forensics. He defined computer forensics as: "Computer forensics, a branch of the forensic sci-



ences, refers to investigation and analysis of media originating from digital sources in an effort to uncover evidence to present in a court of law."

Prof. Holt noted that it is also known as dead box forensics as it involved the examination of powered down computer components. On the other hand, digital forensics, as per him, is "the analysis of digital evidence, which includes network forensics (internet traffic), computer forensics, mobile device forensics (e.g. cell phone) and malware forensics (e.g. viruses)." He elaborated that it includes 'whole array of digital devices'.

With the new overarching nature of digital forensics, the discourse about the typology of evidence into electronic, digital and information systems will not be of much use. For working purposes, therefore, digital forensics is a catch-all term.

#### Digital forensics and criminal investigations

Earlier, when the PECA was enacted in 2016, the authority to investigate an electronic crime was vested solely in the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). However, this has been revised due to the ubiquitous nature of digital evidence in all forms of crime. The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2023 (2023 Amendments) has amended the PECA and declared that the offences under the law shall be cognizable under Section 30 of the Act (meaning thereby that provincial

police organizations can now register criminal cases in relation to the offences). This mainstreaming of the PECA has far-reaching effects, as, more often than not, almost every criminal case now has a digital footprint. The 2023 Amendments have also added a new list of offences to the PECA. These offences include online grooming, solicitation, and cyber incitement (by inserting new Section 22-A to PECA), commercial sexual exploitation of children (inserting new Section 22-B to PECA), use of information systems for kidnapping, abduction and trafficking in person (by inserting new Section 22-C to PECA) and cyberbullying (inserting new Section 24-A to PECA). In addition, incitement to terrorism/extremism, communication for money laundering/extremism, communication for money laundering and financing for terrorism through emerging

technologies like crypto-currency and smart contracts primarily depend on electronic means that invariably call for the collection, preservation and processing of digital evidence through digital forensics.

#### Analysis and recommendations

Foregoing legal developments and notes from the field show that digital forensics will have to be accorded primacy and will be central to mainstream criminal justice processes. Keeping in view the significance, the following may be noted:

First, crime scene inspection and the role of the first police responder are regulated by Chapter XXV of the Police Rules, 1934. This chapter will have to be rewritten to include and allow for the concepts of the first responder for digital evidence and for crime scene investigation, imagining the role of dedicated officers with technical/digital capacities. Presently, it is being practiced in some districts and by select officers; for want of an updated and comprehensive legal framework, the initiatives are often challenged by defence lawyers. In order to provide legality to all police and prosecution actions vis-à-vis digital evidence, there is a strong need to redraft Chapter XXV to cater for electronic and digital evidence.

Secondly, the police and prosecution must be trained to collect, preserve and present digital evidence in a court of law by including dedicated modules in their training programmes on digital forensics.

Thirdly, for the prevention of crimes, police are using data that they collect and maintain for the Criminal Record Office (CRO) and the data and videos that they get from the safe city systems' cameras. They identify hotspots and try to develop indigenous capacity for facial recognition. The use of these technologies for predictive policing must be put under some sort of oversight mechanism and should also be properly legislated upon to strike the necessary balance between security and privacy.

Fourthly, there is a strong case for national and international cooperation for digital forensics as many a time, it will involve non-localized servers and cross-



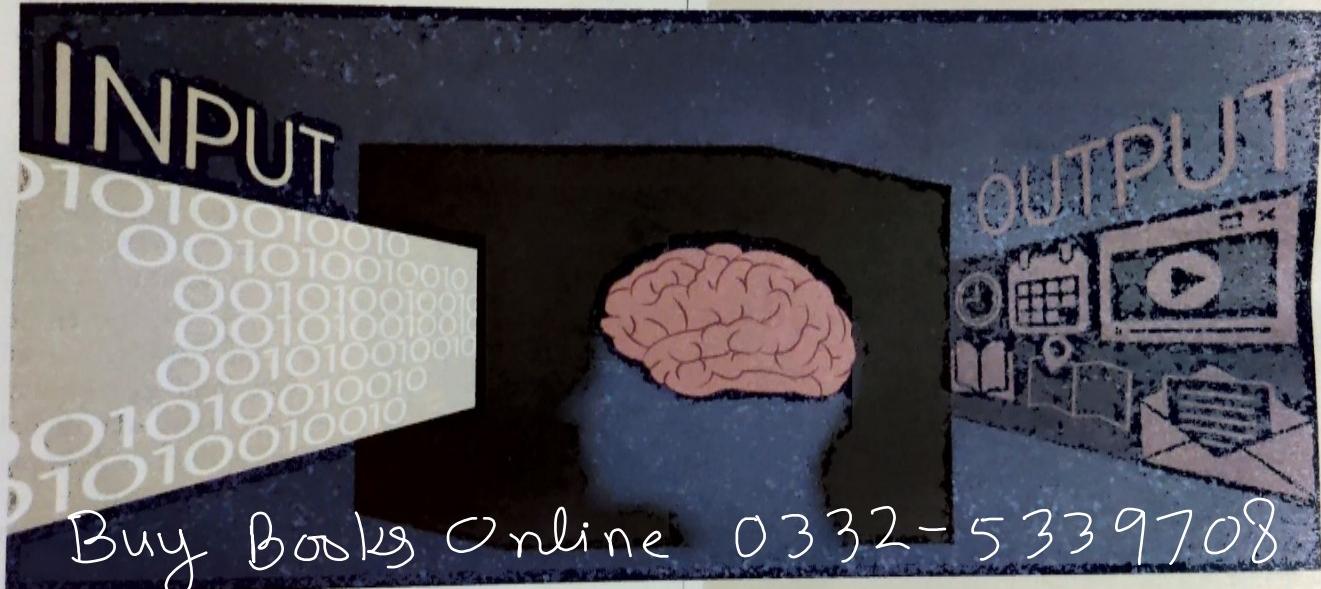
border intermediaries. This national and international cooperation is very bureaucratic and is subject to the rules of business of the federal and provincial governments and to the Mutual Legal Assistance (Criminal Matters) Act, 2020.

Fifthly, accreditation and standardization of digital forensic labs in the country are a must. Unlike the forensic science agencies in the provinces that have a legal framework and are part of international accreditation systems, the digital/IT labs need to be brought under some sort of standardization regime. An added advantage of this accreditation will be that the digital forensics' experts will be declared experts under Article 59 of the Qanoon-e-Shahadat Order, 1984 (the law of evidence; hereinafter referred to as QSO); this legal device will be useful in shielding the appearance of experts in courts unnecessarily.

bilities of editing/manipulation/deep fakes have to be ruled out.

Eighthly, other investigation agencies like the Anti-Narcotics Force, the National Accountability Bureau, the Pakistan Customs (while investigating smuggling-related offences) and the provincial departments vested with lawful coercive powers must be trained in digital forensics.

Ninthly, a better capacity for organizing digital forensics in criminal cases is likely to be of universal value for Pakistan, as cross-border and cross-jurisdictional transmission of evidence will be easy, especially in terrorism cases. Finally, the cybersecurity mechanisms must be integrated with the criminal justice processes. The latest CERT Rules are only focused on the preventive cybersecurity paradigm; detective and restitution-driven aspects must be



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Sixthly, the admissibility of electronic/digital evidence has long been permitted under Article 164 of the QSO. Recently, the scope of the article was expanded to include social media applications like WhatsApp, Facebook, Skype by rewriting Article 164 of the QSO through Section 12 of the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2023. There is, however, a need to improve the weight of digital evidence, which is still treated, at best, as secondary in nature.

Seventhly, the preservation and storage of digital evidence as case property of criminal cases requires amendments in Chapter XVII of the Police Rules, 1934, that regulates the record maintenance and chain of custody system in the criminal justice system. The digital media and forensic reports emanating out of these are to be handled professionally and all possi-

incorporated into the CERT Rules, and seizure of property acquired through electronic processes like e-banking, virtual assets and smart contracts must be added to the tools available to the law-enforcement apparatus and for cross-border/international communication and cooperation.

The above-stated points are not exhaustive by any means, but they do provide a point of departure for further work in this dimension. Indigenous measurement of cybercrime and cyber-related incidents has to be organized, as, at the moment, there is no singular nodal point to deal with the census of these instances. □

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Presenting a comprehensive plan with a total outlay of Rs18.877 trillion, the federal government has presented the budget for the next fiscal year. In this bill, the government has set a challenging tax revenue target of 13 trillion rupees (\$46.66 billion) for the next fiscal, a near 40% jump from the current year, and aims for a modest 3.6 percent GDP growth. The budget deficit is projected at 6.9 percent of GDP.

This year's budget, like last year's, is widely considered to be crafted to align with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) requirements to secure another bailout, this time "larger and longer". It is to be noted here that Pakistan is in talks with the lender for a loan of \$6 billion to \$8 billion, as it seeks to avert a default for an economy growing at the slowest pace in the region.

#### Key Priorities

The budget for FY2024–25 has its foundations on the key macro-economic and fiscal priorities of the government. While progress on the economic front has been steady in recent years, the stage is now set for the country to gear itself towards an era of sustained and inclusive growth with reforms across all sectors of the economy. Fiscal discipline and right-sizing, reducing the footprint of the government through privatization, stimulating investments, reorienting the productive sector towards exports, optimal revenue mobilization with a broader tax base, correcting energy sector

imbalances and a better targeted welfare system are some of the areas where the government is determined to keep its focus going forward.

The government has set challenging revenue targets for FY2024–25. This commensurates with the ongoing reforms at the Federal Board of Revenue where end-to-end digitization is on the cards. The use of AI will supplement this initiative as FBR automates its processes. A compliance risk management system is also being introduced to ensure compliance to tax laws. On the expenditure side, non-essential spending has been curtailed under austerity measures and SOEs are being revamped for improved management and governance. Going forward, this will create the necessary fiscal space for enhanced pro-poor spending, climate change mitigation and provision of quality public services. PSDP has been allocated Rs. 1,400 billion, a historically high figure, to ensure development work on energy and water sector projects, projects in the IT sector, and for the special areas of AJK, GB and the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

#### Main Objectives

- Economic stability and growth through fiscal consolidation and efficient use of public money.
- Strengthening the policy framework for revitalizing the private sector, fostering entrepreneurship, encouraging investment and promoting innovation to stimulate economic

On June 12, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb presented the Federal Budget 2024–25, presenting a comprehensive plan with a total outlay of Rs18.877 trillion. Prioritizing fiscal consolidation, economic growth and social welfare, the budget aims to lay the foundations for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient economy, driven by a home-grown reform agenda. The budget proposals vividly reflect the government's effort to comply with the IMF diktat that has been embraced and named 'Home Grown' as there is no 'Plan B', according to the finance minister, except seeking an IMF programme.



Taxing the taxed ... again

**NATIONAL**

growth.

- » Prioritizing improvements in the country's balance of payments position.
- » Bringing public debt-to-GDP ratio to sustainable levels.
- » Supporting vulnerable section of society through pro-poor initiatives.
- » Improving service delivery/public good by funnelling more funds into PSDP, introducing sector-specific reforms and encouraging innovation.
- » Education and skill development of youth.
- » Integrating green and gender-responsive budgeting into public finance management.

**Salient Features**

- » No increase in duties on the import of essential items.
- » Providing relief for common man.
- » Promote and protect domestic industry and enhance import-substitution.
- » Tariff rationalization to reduce the cost of exemption.
- » Promotion of energy efficiency & conservation.
- » Incentives for agriculture sector.
- » Facilitate the exports.

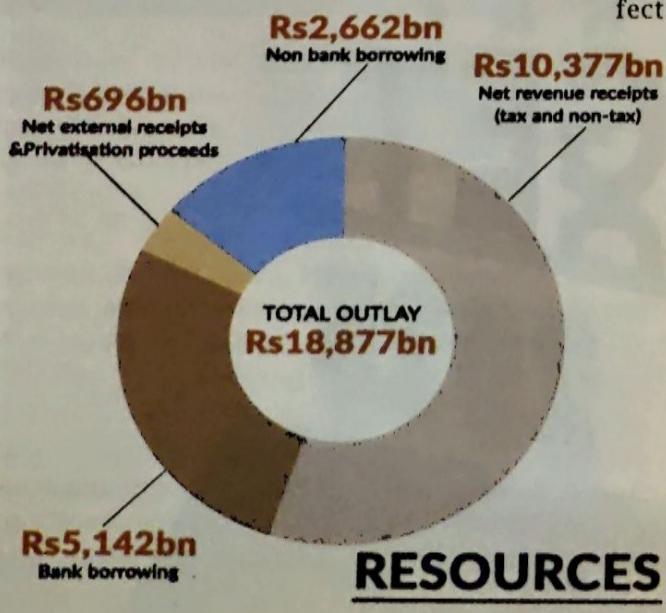
**Relief measure**

- » Exemption of ACD on raw materials of fluids and powders for use in hemodialyzers.
- » Exemption of Customs duties on bovine lipid extract surfactant.

**Review of regulatory regime**

- » Levy / increase of RD on certain items to encouraging local manufacturing.
- » Rationalization of RD on the import of new and used vehicles.
- » Increase/levy of RD on flat-rolled products of iron and non-alloy steel.
- » Withdrawal of exemption of RD on import of ground nuts and margarine imported by food con

fect



ionary.

- » Continuation of RD on import of chloroparafins liquid.
- » Withdrawal of RD on import of sliver cans and lollipop sticks.

**Review of exemption regime**

- » Withdrawal of the concession of customs duties on the import of fresh and dry fruits.
- » Review the exemption of duties on the import of inputs for home appliances.
- » Withdrawal of concessions on duties on the import of hybrid vehicles.
- » Reduction in the concession of customs duties on the import of electric vehicles having value above US\$ 50,000.
- » Incentives for the manufacturing of solar panels and allied equipment.
- » Extension in scope of exemptions on import of machinery and equipment for farming and processing of fish/shrimp and seafood.

**Tariff rationalization**

- » Increase of customs duty on Import of containers for aerosol products.
- » Rationalization of customs duty on import of parts of submersible pumps.
- » Rationalization of Customs duties on import of wheat, sugar, HSD, LNG.
- » Streamlining the imports of aviation-related goods.

**Miscellaneous**

- » Levy of additional customs duty on localized auto parts to incentivize local manufacturing sector.
- » Creation of new PCT codes for rice flour, night vision goggles, blood collection tubes, solar cable, tyre tube valves to facilitate trade.

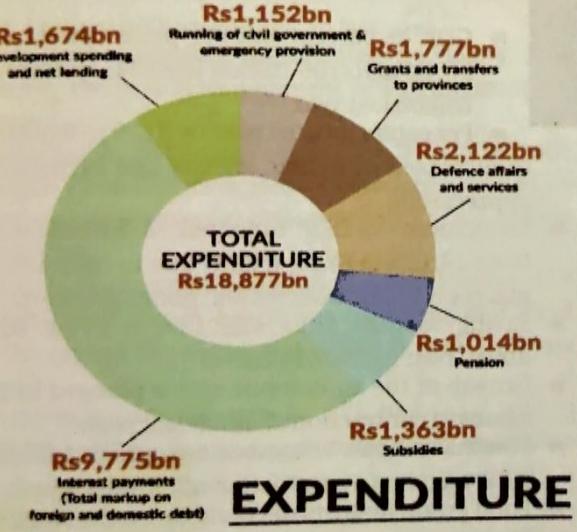
**Legislative changes**

- » Definitions of "Nuclear Material" and "Radioactive Material" included, for implementation of National Nuclear Detection Architecture (NNDA) regime.
- » Establishment of Directorate General of National Targeting Centre (NTC), as a national single window of enforcement for all LEAs and Directorate General of Trade Based Money Laundering for cognizance of offences related to trade-based money laundering.
- » Officers of National Command Authority (NCA) and Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) empowered to implement and enforce Customs Act.
- » Intelligence Bureau (IB) added in the list of Government agencies mandated to assist Customs in investigations.
- » Power for extension of detention period assigned to Additional Collector or Additional Director for smooth functioning.
- » Two new penal clauses have been proposed to take cognizance of offences related to nuclear and radioactive material.
- » Rationalization of pitch of penalty for the importers seeking clearance of declared confiscated goods against payment of redemption

fine.

- » Enhanced prescribed penalty against a police officer who having seized goods fails to deliver such goods to Custom House.
- » Penalties enhanced to deter smugglers and miscreants from attacking Customs personnel, in view of recent attacks on Customs staff.
- » To deter the possibility of illegal removal and pilferage of smuggled goods liable to confiscation placed in the custody of owner, penal provision is proposed.
- » Changes have been made with the objective of making the system more efficient by accelerating the disposal of pending cases in the Customs Appellate Tribunal.
- » Changes are made with a view to ensure that the cases are swiftly decided in the High Courts and also to meet the principles of natural justice and

fai



the IMF as the government intends to do a long-time borrowing of more than \$8 billion to the tune of exhausting its SDR limits. In lieu, the budget promises to ensure stability by efficient use of public money, introducing indispensable reforms in the taxation machinery, reduce current account deficit and mobilise the private sector to stimulate growth. That is easier said than done. But the good point is that the budget has retained the slab of taxation for salaried class at Rs600,000, opted for progressive taxation for higher income sections and encouraged tax compliance with a capital gains tax fixed at 15% for filers and up to 45% for non-filers. This, nonetheless, is an innovative strategy to enhance revenue and also to digitize the economy.

The proposed layout has enhanced the GST on textile retail sector from 15% to 18% and also raised FED on cement to Rs3 from Rs2 per kg. A generous allocation of Rs79 billion for the IT sector, with incentives for importing plant and machinery for the solar panel industry, will bring in dividends in the energy sector, which is why Rs4 billion for e-bikes and Rs2 billion for energy saving fans have been allocated.

Notwithstanding a budget deficit estimated at 6.9% of GDP, as the Economic Survey had painted a dismal performance of the economy last year, a 10% allocation has been made for the development of ex-FATA, along with Rs244 billion for the social sector development countrywide. The budget proposition hinges on good faith to attract foreign investment and strike a renewed deal with IMF, and in doing so it will have to test the rough waters at home in terms of inflationary revulsion and slow growth in a jaundiced environment of political instability.

#### Conclusion

The budget has laid out some ambitious targets — in line with the demands of the IMF to help Pakistan strengthen its case for a larger and longer bailout so that it can anchor its newfound economic stability of the last one year. While the measures announced by the Finance Minister are a step in the right direction, and seek to tax 'sacred cows' such as real estate investors, and the like, these lack any "disruptive policy changes", and represent incremental measures towards documentation of the economy. However, while the tax and deficit targets are ambitious, it is not impossible to pull those off. Yet doubts remain about the authorities' ability to enforce the new measures fully and ensure greater compliance.

We hope that stern attitude of the lender of last resort and the fatigue of our time-tested friends to our perennial dependency on borrowings to support our habit of living beyond means would serve as an eye opener and make us mend our ways without any further loss of time.

The complacency that has been enveloping our economic conundrum for quite some time must be replaced with a strong sense of urgency and concern. ■

*The writer is a CSS aspirant.*

r trial.

- » Strengthening the provision of alternate dispute resolution mechanism.

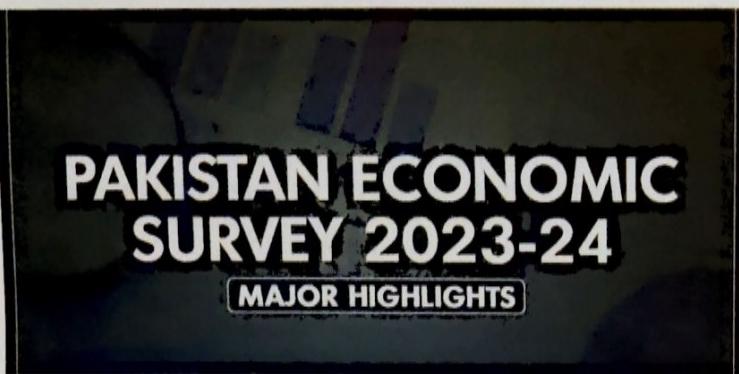
#### Analysis

The majority of Pakistanis will certainly be dejected after hearing the maiden budget speech from banker-turned Federal Finance Minister for Finance & Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb. Not because there will be no relief for them—nobody expects that anymore in Pakistan—but the real cause of disappointment will be the continuation of an unjust tax system that expropriates away a large sum of income from the lower and middle-class salaried persons.

The thrust of the budget proposals remains consolidation, and rightly so. Although we are notoriously famous for changing course when we reach the last mile, it is, however, imperative that we stay the course and desist from taking any misstep that might possibly derail the whole process.

This budget apparently is a window-dressing to oblige

On June 11, the federal government unveiled the Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-24, which presents an overview of the country's economic performance during the outgoing fiscal year. The document gives some good and some not-so good news, as the country's economy registered a moderate recovery, reflected by a GDP growth of 2.38 percent against the previous year's contraction of 0.21 percent. But, it was also startling that the performance of the economy remained below expectations. Even more, cash-strapped Pakistan witnessed the highest-ever single-year increase in tax exemptions or concessions, surging by 73.24 percent, or Rs1.64 trillion, in the outgoing fiscal year.



The Pakistan Economic Survey, a premier annual publication of the Ministry of Finance, offers key insights on macroeconomic trends, sectoral accomplishments, development policies and strategies. The latest edition of this annual publication, which was unveiled, on June 11, by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, has underscored the resilience and robustness of Pakistan's economy in the face of multifaceted domestic and external challenges. Although the economic growth rate fell well below the government's expectations, at 2.4%, it is still encouraging that, due to the government's timely and effective policy measures, the economy has witnessed a moderate recovery in FY2024 – against previous year's contraction of 0.21 percent – despite challenges of fiscal consolidation, monetary tightening and geopolitical tensions, as well as persistently high inflationary pressure. What offers a source of comfort is that the economy has entered a stabilization mode – on the back of measures like cutting down on unnecessary imports and administrative steps like curbing smuggling and misuse of Afghan transit trade. Here are some highlights of the Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-24:

- » Real GDP grew by 2.38% in FY24, reversing the negative growth of 0.2% in FY23 on prudent policy management, resumed inflows from partners and recovery in major trading partners.
- » The key driver of economic growth in FY24 was the agriculture sector, which grew the most in 19 years, according to the survey. The sector grew by 6.25%

in FY24, driven by 16.82% growth in key crops like wheat, rice and cotton.

- » The industrial sector grew by 1.21% in FY24, with manufacturing up by 2.42% and construction up by 5.86%.
- » Services sector, making up 57.7% of GDP in FY24, experienced a moderate growth of 1.21%.
- » GDP at current market prices increased by 26.4% to Rs106 trillion in FY24, up from Rs84 trillion last year.
- » Per capita income rose by \$129 to \$1,680, due to increased economic activity and exchange rate appreciation.
- » Investment-to-GDP ratio fell to 13.14% in FY24 from 14.13% in FY23, mainly due to contractionary macroeconomic policies and political uncertainty.
- » Saving-to-GDP ratio was 13% in FY24, slightly down from 13.2% in FY23.
- » Growth of the automobile sector plunged by 37.4% against a contraction of 42.2% last year.
- » Pharmaceuticals witnessed encouraging growth of 23.2%, against a contraction of 23.1% last year.
- » Food group imports declined by 14.2%. The group's imports dropped to \$6.3 billion.
- » Pakistan's headline inflation Consumer Price Index (CPI) averaged at 24.52% during July–May in FY24. In FY2022–23, CPI stood at 29.2%.
- » Current account deficit (CAD) shrank by 94.8% to \$200 million in July–April, compared to \$3.9 billion during the same period last year.
- » Trade deficit in goods decreased by 21.6% to \$17.7 billion in July–April from \$22.6 billion last year amid a significant decline in imports.
- » Primary income account deficit rose by 34.8% to \$6.1 billion in July–April, compared to \$4.6 billion last year, driven by higher dividend repatriation and interest payments.
- » Remittances experienced a 3% year-on-year (YoY) decline, totalling \$23.9 billion during July–April.
- » Financial account saw net inflows of \$3.9 billion in July–April, mainly due to inflows from the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) and friendly countries,

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compared to outflows of \$0.6 billion last year.

- » Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows increased by 8.1% to \$1.5 billion in July-April, compared to \$1.3 billion in the same period last year.
- » The Pakistani rupee appreciated by nearly 3.0% during the first eleven months of FY24 against the US dollar.
- » Total public debt stood at Rs67.5 trillion by end-March 2024. Domestic debt was recorded at Rs43.4 trillion while external debt reached Rs24.1 trillion (\$86.7bn).
- » With high revenue collection of Rs9.8 trillion (41% higher YoY), fiscal deficit was contained at 3.7% of GDP against the same period's deficit of 3.6% last year.
- » Total expenditures grew by 37% to Rs13.7 trillion (Rs10.1 trillion in same period last year) mainly on account of 33% higher current expenditure (Rs12.3 trillion).
- » Primary Balance posted a surplus of Rs1,615 billion against a deficit of Rs503.8 billion.
- » Tax collection grew by 29% while non-tax revenues increased by 91%. However, for July-May, the FBR's revenue collection stood at Rs8.1 trillion.

#### **Analysis**

The Economic Survey 2023-24 gives good news: key macroeconomic indicators are better than the comparable period of last year with GDP growth rate of 2.38 percent this year against negative 0.21 percent last year (attributed to "catastrophic floods, surging world commodity prices, global and domestic monetary tightening and political uncertainty" though these catastrophic floods had a "fertility

impact" on major crops - wheat, rice, cotton) with agriculture growth at 6.25 percent this year against 1.55 percent last year, industry growth at 1.21 percent this year against negative 2.94 percent last year, and services grew by 0.86 percent last year and positive 1.21 percent this year.

The not-so good news is that the comparison with July-March 2022-23 is invidious as the then Ishaq Dar-led Finance Ministry had brought the country perilously close to default through implementing two majorly flawed policies that were violative of the pledges made under the then ongoing IMF programme leading to its suspension: (i) announcing unbudgeted 110 billion-rupees electricity subsidy to exporters, while 33 million Pakistanis were living under the open sky due to the devastating summer 2022 floods; and (ii) controlling the rupee-dollar parity that led to multiple prevailing exchange rates which, in turn, strangled official remittance inflows by 4 billion dollars. The obvious denouement: the bar was so low last fiscal year that any improvement, especially when calculated in percentage terms, would appear to be significant. Three major improvements are in the current account deficit though desired inflows from exports and remittances have yet to reach 2022 levels, the rise in foreign exchange reserves (strengthened almost entirely by the rollovers by friendly countries) and an improvement in the primary surplus though that is on the back of a rising budget deficit in total terms; however, the Survey notes that the deficit is the same as last year in percentage terms.

The Survey notes that the performance of the economy in the outgoing fiscal year was below expectations. This observation does not take account of the usual over-optimistic projections made in our budgets - some targeted towards the general public (inclusive of

understating the rate of inflation at 11.3 percent for May and an unrealistic 6.3 percent unemployment) while others are focused on appeasing multilateral lender concerns especially at present when negotiations on the next longer term IMF programme are under way that entail agreement on the macroeconomic indicators (measured by their acceptability by the Fund team) on which would depend the way forward. □

Economic Survey 2023-24: mobile phones dominate as Pakistan's **telecom sector imports stand at \$1.62bn**



## NATIONAL

**S**hadow economy, also known as informal or undocumented economy, is a significant issue that affects many countries worldwide. In Pakistan, the shadow economy is already equal to about 40 percent of GDP. Some estimates suggest that the country's informal economy is responsible for a large portion of the economic activity, with around 70 percent of the national GDP being generated by the

A recent joint study, conducted by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority and the International Labour Organization, on the issue of Pakistan's informal economy, has made shocking revelations. The report titled "Mapping of Barriers and Opportunities to Reduce the Informality of Enterprises in Pakistan" has revealed that Pakistan's informal economy is valued at around \$457 billion, equivalent to 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product, with 72.5 percent of the labour force outside agriculture employed by the informal sector. The report emphasizes that these activities not only lead to a loss of government revenue but also foster a shadow economy, making it challenging to monitor and regulate economic transactions.

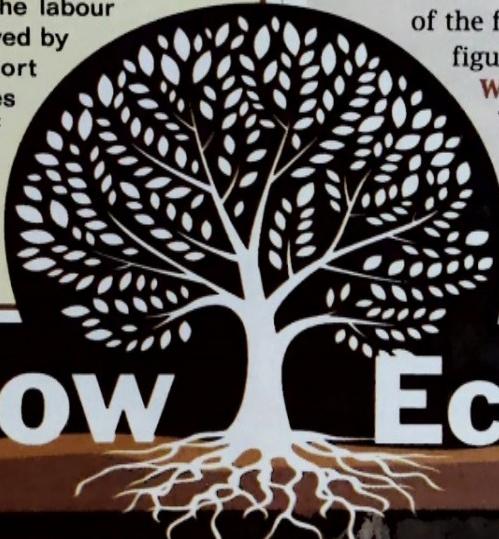
Muhammad Bilal Butt

informal sector. This huge size of the undocumented sector has been a cause for much consternation for policymakers as it poses several challenges in the implementation of laws, especially when it comes to regulating economic activities and ensuring compliance with various laws and regulations, leading to the national exchequer potentially losing out on hundreds of billions in tax revenue.

A recent joint study by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has provided fresh and disturbing evidence of the persistent growth of the informal economy. The report "Mapping of Barriers and Opportunities to Reduce the Informality of Enterprises in Pakistan" suggests that the total size of Pakistan's informal sector is projected to be an enormous \$457 billion, in sharp contrast to the size of the formal economy, which, as per official figures, is worth \$375 billion in 2023-24.

**What is shadow economy?**

The shadow or informal economy refers to economic activities taking place outside the tax and regulatory system, and may or may not have any backward or forward linkages with the organized sectors. Every



# Shadow Economy

**Why  
formalization  
of the informal  
sector is  
necessary**

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## NATIONAL

country is grappling with the issue of a parallel economy; Pakistan is not alone in this. This sector encompasses various entities, such as street vendors, domestic workers, small businesses and large portions of the real estate sector, frequently operating without formal registration.

**Definitions****a. ILO**

According to ILO, informal or shadow economy refers to "all economic activities by workers and economic units that are - in law or in practice - not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements". This definition, however, does not cover illicit activities.

**b. Pakistan Labour Force Survey**

In Pakistan, no official definition of the informal sector (a sub-set of the informal economy) exists. However, different institutions have attempted to define informality in terms relevant to their work or area of expertise. A commonly cited definition is proffered by the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2020-21, which states, "The informal sector is defined as where the industrial units are not registered as per [the] Factory Act and employment size is less than ten employees, and there is no regular employee." This definition is concerned with industrial units or manufacturing enterprises, and does not account for informality in the service sector - that is, in wholesale and retail trade, construction, transport, personal and community services and other types of services.

**c. The State Bank of Pakistan**

In 2010, a working paper by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) defined the informal economy as simply "unmeasured and untaxed economic activity." The paper further clarified that the informal economy in Pakistan consists of firms that are unregistered but carry out legal activities. As such, informality is not to be confused with underground or illegal activities.

**Why does the shadow economy exist?****a. Lax implementation of law**

One key reason why informal business dealings persist is the lack of enforcement of rules and regulations. Government agencies responsible for tax and compliance issues tend to focus on businesses that are visible and have dealings with the authorities. As a result, the large informal economy is left to function at will.

**b. Corruption of tax authorities**

The informal economy is mostly caused by corruption among tax authorities and businesses. According to a study, out of Rs100 of tax collected, only Rs38 goes to the government while Rs62 is divided among the taxpayer, tax collector and tax practitioner, leading to unrealized tax income.

**c. High tax burden**

Another reason is the high tax burden on formal businesses, which can make it difficult for them to operate profitably. Owners of informal enterprises argue that the government provides few or no services and, as such, cannot expect businesses to pay tax. This perception highlights the fragility of the social contract, whereby shortcomings in public services, where available, do not inspire confidence in the state. Political instability and allegations of corruption also limit trust in institutions. The state is also perceived to favour some groups in terms of taxation, either by imposing nominal taxes or by not enforcing tax compliance on some sectors.

**d. Quality of assessment**

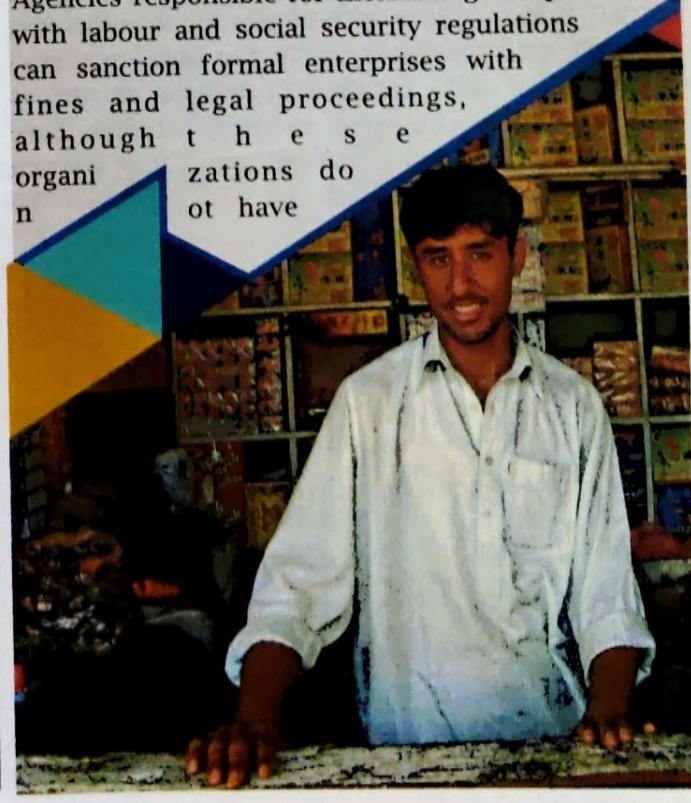
The quality of assessments carried out by tax authorities is a concern for those operating in formal economy. They report being served notices with clearly incorrect assessments. Although they are willing to pay tax, they have to spend time and resources to have assessments counter-checked, and then negotiate with authorities to explain errors in calculations.

**e. Compliance costs**

Compliance costs - such as the costs of hiring accountants, tax lawyers and human resource managers, among others - add up as businesses expand. Incurring these additional compliance costs is a deterrent to formalization.

**f. Social security inspections**

Agencies responsible for monitoring compliance with labour and social security regulations can sanction formal enterprises with fines and legal proceedings, although these organizations do not have





the same extent of power as tax authorities, such as the Federal Board of Revenue.

#### **g. Lack of transparency**

In the informal sector, transactions are often conducted in cash, making it difficult to track and regulate economic activity. This lack of transparency makes it challenging to enforce laws and regulations, such as tax laws, labour laws and environmental regulations.

#### **h. Government's laxity**

The government hesitates to eradicate the labour-intensive informal sector due to the pressure of the rising unemployment rate because formal economic activity is incapable of accommodating the otherwise unemployed workers. Secondly, the workforce lacks the technical skills required in national as well as international documented markets. Studies have found that the rise in higher education among youth has a negative relationship with the growth of the informal sector.

#### **i. Preference for cash transactions**

People usually prefer to deal in cash. According to a report published by McKinsey Global, where the share of digital payments is 55% in the UK and 49% in the USA, it is less than 1% in Pakistan. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has reported that more than 60% of business is conducted in cash in the economy of Pakistan. Cash-based employment is common in hiring labour for construction, production factories and other similar small-scale businesses. Cash-based businesses, services and employment are very difficult to monitor effectively, thus, a significant portion of economic output evades documentation and taxation simply because it operates under the shade of cash dealings.

#### **j. Ineffective border control**

Unfortunately, Pakistan's poorly controlled border system makes undocumented trade relatively easy and economical. Regarding documentation of Pakistan's cross-border trade, the Durand Line (Pak-Afghan border) and Pakistan-Iran border appear to have a major share in the ungoverned movement of goods.

#### **Advantages of shadow economy**

In Pakistan, the shadow economy includes everything from street vendors and small-scale traders to large-scale smuggling operations and unregistered businesses.

According to a report by the World

Bank, the shadow economy in Pakistan was valued at \$457 billion in 2022, accounting for 35.6% of the country's GDP-PPP level.

The shadow economy plays a significant role in Pakistan's economy. It provides employment opportunities for millions of people, particularly those who are less educated or lack formal job skills. It also provides goods and services at lower prices, making them more accessible to low-income households.

Pakistan has been facing high inflation rates in recent years, which has had a significant impact on the economy and people's livelihoods. According to the SBP, inflation reached a 50-year high of 35.4% in March 2023, up from 12.7% in March 2022. The highest inflation rates were seen in food items, with an increase of 69.98% in the prices of wheat, 82.41% in the price of rice, and 53.51% in the price of cooking oil in 2021.

The impact of high inflation on Pakistan's economy due to the Covid-19 pandemic has been further exacerbated by the recent political unrest in the country and the floods. Pakistan is still failing to meet IMF conditions for loan schemes which would further destabilize the economy.

Despite the negative impacts of high inflation, the shadow economy in Pakistan has been playing a critical role in helping people to survive. It provides access to goods and services at lower prices than the formal economy, making them more accessible to low-income households. For example, street vendors and small-scale traders often offer essential goods, such as food and clothing, at lower prices than formal retailers.

The shadow economy also creates employment

## NATIONAL

opportunities for millions of people. According to a report by the ILO, the shadow economy in Pakistan employed over 75% of the total workforce. This is particularly important given that the formal economy is unable to absorb the country's growing workforce.

**Disadvantages**

However, the shadow economy also has negative impacts on the economy, such as the loss of tax revenue for the government, the undermining of formal businesses and the lack of regulation and oversight.

The shadow economy creates a dichotomy, whereby businesses that comply with rules and regulations are at a disadvantage and face unfair competition. The policy of leaving large sections of the economy untaxed, while focusing on a few groups, is detrimental to the economy as a whole, and is an impediment to creating a healthy tax culture.

Another significant negative impact of the shadow economy is the loss of tax revenue for the government. According to the World Bank, Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio is one of the lowest in the world, i.e. 5.6% in 2022. The shadow economy contributes to this problem by operating outside of formal tax systems.

Additionally, the lack of regulation and oversight in the shadow economy can lead to a range of negative outcomes, such as poor quality goods and services, exploitation of workers and environmental degradation. These issues can harm the economy and society as a whole.

Tax evasion by informal employees and business enterprises prevents the government from funding public goods and services. In addition to deficient social security and legal protection, informal labourers are more susceptible to abuse and economic shocks. For instance, according to the ILO, employees in Pakistan have little access to labour welfare services.

**Way forward**

Formalization of the economy is a complex and gradual process, but it is essential for development and monitoring of progress, as well as to develop and modify policies and interventions over time to achieve desired targets. However, bringing about a transition of enterprises from the informal to the formal economy is not a simple task. Enterprises will be more motivated to formalize if the benefits of

formalization outweigh the costs.

Simplifying compliance requirements, reviewing tax rates - which businesses consider to be high - and introducing a system of (more) progressive payment requirements could potentially support this transition to formality. The transition of the informal sector to the formal sector can only occur when the informal sector is given relief from the burden of regulatory compliance and is given enough time to adjust to the modern, digitized formal system. It is believed that simplifying registration processes, easing rules for business conduct and lowering the standards of protection of formal sector workers will bring informal enterprises and their workers into the fold of formality.

**Conclusion**

The undocumented economy presents significant challenges for governments, particularly in developing countries like Pakistan. Regulating the informal sector can be difficult due to the lack of transparency and reliable data, making it challenging to enforce laws and regulations. The rise of cash-based transactions and poorly controlled borders also contribute to the prevalence of the undocumented economy in Pakistan. Addressing these challenges will require policies that promote transparency, increase digital payments and establish effective mechanisms for regulating economic activity. Only then can Pakistan move towards a sustainable and inclusive economy that benefits all citizens. □

*The writer is a student at KEMU, Lahore.*



Azra Kishwar

# Digital TERRORISM

## How to rein in the pernicious campaigns

In the digital age, terrorism has transcended traditional battlefields and physical borders, evolving into a complex and pervasive threat known as digital terrorism. Understanding digital terrorism and its implications is crucial for developing effective countermeasures and ensuring global security.

When it comes to defining 'Digital Terrorism', experts say that it refers to the use of digital technology, particularly the internet and digital communication platforms, by terrorist organizations and individuals to further their goals. In Pakistan, this is usually carried out by spreading disinformation, which is a widespread and multifaceted problem in the country and is intricately entwined with the nation's diverse social and lately technical environment, through social media platforms. This misuse of social media has poisoned the minds of our youth against all the institutions of Pakistan, especially Pakistan Army, which is seen as the backbone of the nation and a symbol of national pride, creating a dangerous atmosphere of polarization and hatred within the country.

Although social media is a powerful tool for disseminating information and shaping public opinion, this power has been abused by elements who seek to undermine Pakistan's stability by spreading misinformation, inciting violence and stoking anti-Pakistan sentiments. Tailored stories frequently arise to further political or

ideological goals among stark differences in racial, religious, intellectual and political perspectives. These individuals and groups work under the guise of freedom of expression, but in reality, they are fighting a digital war against the foundations of the country. One of the primary targets of this digital terrorism is the Pakistan Army which has been the subject of a pernicious wave of propaganda and irrational misinformation that has recently resurfaced on social media. When used as a weapon by adversaries, this propaganda aims to create division among army leaders and soldiers while discrediting the organization under the pretense of advancing political objectives. So, if left unchecked, this digital terrorism can destroy the fabric of Pakistani society and threaten the future of the nation.

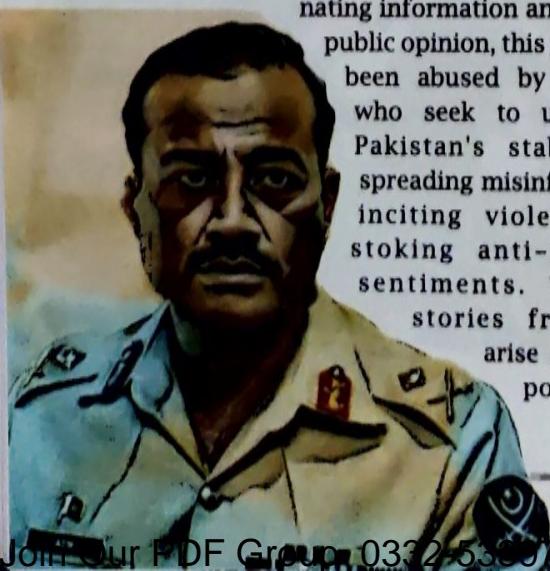
This anti-army propaganda is aimed at damaging its reputation, undermining its efforts to maintain security

**Recently, at the 83rd Formation Commanders Conference, the top brass of military has vowed to comprehensively defeat the threat of what it termed "digital terrorism". The participants of the annual conference, which discusses geostrategic dynamics and national security, underscored that politically motivated and vested digital terrorism, unleashed by conspirators duly abetted by their foreign cohorts, against state institutions is clearly meant to try to induce despondency in the Pakistani nation, to sow discord among national institutions, especially the Armed Forces and the people of Pakistan by peddling blatant lies, fake news and propaganda.**

and stability in the region and creating divisions within the ranks of the armed forces. By sowing doubts, these digital terrorists want to weaken the army's resolve and erode its support among the people.

So, there should be a zero-tolerance policy against those involved in digital terrorism. Education and awareness campaigns should be conducted to make people aware of the dangers of digital terrorism and the importance of maintaining national unity and solidarity. Parents, teachers and community leaders must play a role in monitoring the online activities of the youth and guiding them towards positive and constructive engagement with social media. By teaching young people the value of patriotism, tolerance and respect for diversity, we can protect future generations from suffering the toxic effects of anti-Pakistan propaganda. ■

*The writer is a CSS aspirant.*



## EXAM PACK

JWT Editorial Board

**J**ahangir's World Times (JWT): First of all, please tell us about your educational background.

**Dr. Maryam Zahid (DMZ):** I completed my MBBS from King Edward Medical University (KEMU), Lahore, in 2022.

**JWT:** As you have been allocated to Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS), what was the most attractive feature of this service for you?

**DMZ:** PAS offers a broader canvas to work upon and so it helps in bringing about the much-desirable and much-needed change that everybody dreams of.

**JWT:** How was your experience at the World Times Institute?

**DMZ:** I found my experience at WTI

very enlightening in various aspects. From the written test series to interview mocks, I came to know about my shortcomings, and gathered valuable tips and tricks that eventually paved my way to success.

**JWT:** What was the significance of newspaper reading in your preparation? How did staying updated with current affairs shape your success?

**DMZ:** Newspaper reading holds prime importance for any competitive examination. I utilized it for improving my vocabulary, refining my written expression, collecting facts and keeping myself updated with recent events around the globe.

**JWT:** What was your overall strategy for cracking the CSS exam?

**DMZ:** I adopted a three-pronged strategy:

1. Read quality material;
2. Present my arguments in an appeasing way; and
3. Do a lot of prior written

practice. I followed these things throughout my journey.

**JWT:** What was your approach to time management throughout the preparation process? How did you balance multiple subjects and cover the vast syllabus?

**DMZ:** I covered the syllabus in 4-5 months and then revised the whole syllabus thrice, besides doing written practice for 2-2.5 months. I didn't cover everything under the sky; instead, I had a directed and

## Detailed Marks Sheet

Subject	Marks
<b>Compulsory Subjects</b>	
Essay	44
English Précis & Composition	61
GSA	48
Current Affairs	63
Pakistan Affairs	60
Islamiat	67
<b>Optional Subjects</b>	
Political Science	119
Governance and Public Policies	85
Environmental Science	71
Criminology	52
Punjabi	70
<b>Total Written</b>	<b>740</b>
Viva Voce	150
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>890</b>

"I found my experience at WTI very enlightening in various aspects"

IN CONVERSATION WITH

**Dr. Maryam Zahid (PAS)**  
4th in Pakistan; CSS 2023-24

## Selection of optional subjects

Consider these things:

1. Your personal liking
2. Available time
3. Scoring trend

## Notes-making

I used to write headings with some statistics or some other info which could help me later.

## Revision

Revise at least twice. Revise important topics, data and facts more importantly.



## EXAM PACK

**My Interview Experience**

Worthy Chairman asked me why I was so in a hurry that I didn't even wait for my graduation to complete. To this, I replied, "The sooner, the better." They asked me if I was an introvert. To this, I replied, "I'm Ambivert." They all laughed at these two points.

well-steered journey.

**JWT:** What, in your opinion, is the key to making a difference in the written part of the CSS exam?

**DMZ:** If I sum it up: Good presentation

**JWT:** Generally, compulsory subjects are considered low-scoring, what was your strategy to get through these very papers?

**DMZ:** I wrote relevant yet quality content on 12-14 pages. Moreover, I gave references from almost all FPSC-recommended books for all my subjects.

**JWT:** How should one write answers to get maximum marks?

**DMZ:** For that, aspirants should take care of:

1. Being relevant
2. Giving self-explanatory headings
3. Writing quality content, aided by references and statistics
4. Adding illustrations
5. Writing engaging introduction and a proper conclusion

**JWT:** Should there be some word limit kept in mind while writing answers?

**DMZ:** One should address the question completely; however, it is advisable to keep the length of an answer at 6-8 pages. I, however, wrote about 12-14 pages.

**JWT:** How did you structure your Essay and what was your strategy for Précis and Composition Paper?

**DMZ:** For Essay, I focused on correct decoding of the topic and producing good, self-explanatory argumentation that was free of grammatical and spelling mistakes. In order to improve my expression, I practised and got evaluated a lot of essays.

For Précis, I kept a good grip on vocabulary, pairs of words and other parts of the paper.

**JWT:** How should a new aspirant start his/her preparations?

**DMZ:** A new aspirant should start the journey with a good mentor. Improving

language is the foremost thing. Besides, one should start practising essay outlines and précis daily and along with these things, one should start one compulsory subject and one easy optional in the beginning.

**JWT:** What should be an ideal timetable for a new aspirant to make sound preparations for the CSS exam?

**SB:** It is totally subjective, however, ideally 5-7 hours a day for a new aspirant.

**Rapid Fire**

Your inspiration	My personality traits
Attempts	01
Qualification	MBBS
Alma mater	King Edward Medical University, Lahore
Schooling medium	English
Your study schedule	15-18 hours a day
Your sources	FPSC-recommended readings, Magazines, Google and You Tube
Academy or Institute you joined	World Times Institute (for mock exam and interview preparation)
Group preferences	1. PAS 2. PSP 3. PCS 4. IRS 5. MLCG
Why PAS?	Broader work canvas and its mobile nature
Hobbies	Reading, baking
Extracurricular achievements	Won Chief Minister On-Spot Essay Writing Competitions twice
Fave personality	Dr. Ruth Pfau
Fave book	To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
Fave quote	"It is not over until you win!" — Les Brown
Secret of your success	Purity of intention, determination, and remembrance of Allah at every step
Your role model	I follow different personalities for different aspects of their behaviour.

**JWT:** What areas should the new aspirants focus on while preparing for the CSS exam?

**DMZ:** English grammar and reading.

**Advice for fresh aspirants**

Believe in your abilities, work hard and always seek help from Allah. Indeed, He is the Best Bestower.

**JWT:** What was the importance of revision in your preparation strategy? How did you manage to revise effectively while covering such a vast syllabus?

**DMZ:** I believe, revision plays a very crucial part. It assists in producing the maximum knowledge on paper. ■

# Forbes 30 30 UNDER FOR ASIA 2024

Forbes' 30 Under 30 recently shared their Asia list, which celebrated 300 young entrepreneurs and innovators under the age of 30 who have transformed their respective industries across the Asia-Pacific region. Among those honoured in this list are seven Pakistanis. Let's know more about them:

Seven Pakistanis make to the list

## 1. Aleena Nadeem (Lahore)

**Founder, EduFi**

Aleena Nadeem, an MIT graduate runs a Lahore-headquartered startup EduFi which serves with the motto "Study Now, Pay Later" to help more Pakistanis go to university.

Aleena's concept is simple. She realized some paycheck-to-paycheck families couldn't handle lump sum payments at the start of a semester - but could afford tuition paid monthly. EduFi has partnered with 27 Pakistani colleges that funnel prospective customers its way. It does its own credit-vetting, then pays tuition for approved students who repay the loan on a monthly basis as they study. EduFi's \$6.1 million pre-seed round in November led by Zain VC was the largest such round in Pakistani startup history.

## 2. Sarkhail Bawany (Karachi)

**Head of Product, Abhi**

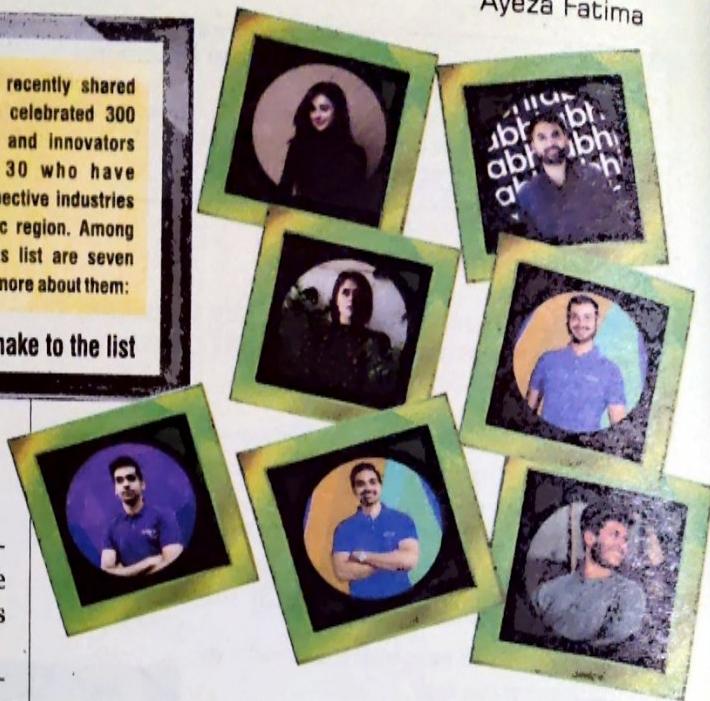
Featured in the finance and venture category, Sarkhail Bawany is the head of product at a fintech company 'Abhi' that enables workers to withdraw a percentage of their salary before they get the paycheck. Abhi works on a B2B2C model, partnering with companies such as Unilever Pakistan to offer the service as a benefit to employees. Abhi also issued \$6.8 million in Islamic bonds in May 2023, following a \$17 million Series A in 2022.

Sarkhail is also the CEO of the startup's payment services subsidiary, 'Abhipay'.

## 3. Bushra Sultan (Lahore)

**Artist**

Lahore-based Bushra Sultan is a filmmaker, creative director and production designer with a special interest in challenging the country's constraints on women. Among her most notable works was a campaign called 'Guria' for luxury clothing brand Demesne Couture. It depicted two opulently dressed women being controlled like puppets by giant hands pulling strings, a comment on Pakistan's wedding industry



and the demands made on brides.

Sultan is also known for her audacious 'Chimera' campaign featuring headless women.

## 4. Kasra Zunnaiyyer (Karachi)

**Cofounder, Trukkr**

Kasra Zunnaiyyer, the founder of Trukkr, which has developed a management platform for Pakistan's logistics sector, has been featured in the enterprise technology category. Established in 2020, the startup's software allows users to obtain financing, track their fleets and connect with customers. As it is one of the first digital services targeting the country's small- and medium-sized trucking companies, Trukkr has caught the attention of global investors. It raised \$6.4 million in seed funding last year, led by Washington, D.C.-based Accion Venture Lab and London-based Sturgeon Capital.

## 5-7. Adeel Abid, Aizaz Nayyer, Ali Raza

**Cofounders, Linkstar**

Adeel Abid, Aizaz Nayyer and Ali Raza are the cofounders of the Karachi-based platform for freelancers, Linkstar. The company helps freelancers create free portfolio websites that can be upgraded with advanced functionalities such as international payments and social media integration. Freelancers can also learn from online courses on the platform. By the end of 2022, Linkstar raised an undisclosed pre-seed round from US-based SOSV. In 2023, the founders announced they had acquired Oliv, a Dubai-based career marketplace. ■

The writer is a student at UMT, Lahore.

## Transnational Terrorism

### A threat to global security

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**T**ransnational terrorism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that poses a significant threat to global security. In recent years, the world has witnessed a rise in terrorist attacks carried out by transnational terrorist organizations such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram. These groups operate across national borders and seek to advance their political, ideological or religious agendas through the use of violence and intimidation. This piece will analyze the nature of transnational terrorism, its root causes and its implications for international security.

One of the defining characteristics of transnational terrorism is its cross-border nature. Unlike traditional forms of terrorism that are confined to a specific country or region, transnational terrorism transcends national boundaries and operates on a global scale. This presents a unique set of challenges for counterterrorism efforts, as terrorist organizations can exploit differences in legal jurisdictions, weak governance structures and porous borders to evade detection and prosecution. The decentralized and fluid nature of transnational terrorist networks also makes them difficult to dismantle, as new leaders can quickly emerge to replace those who are captured or killed.

The root causes of transnational terrorism are complex and multifaceted. While there is no single factor that can account for the rise of transnational terrorism, several key drivers have been identified. These include political grievances, social marginalization, economic inequality and religious extremism. In many cases, transnational terrorist organizations exploit these grievances to recruit disaffected individuals and mobilize support for their cause. The internet and social media have also played

a significant role in the radicalization and recruitment of individuals to join terrorist groups, allowing them to disseminate propaganda and communicate with potential recruits across borders. The implications of transnational terrorism for international security are far-reaching. One of the most immediate consequences is the loss of human life and the destruction of property caused by terrorist attacks. These attacks not only create a climate of fear and uncertainty but also have a destabilizing effect on

political, economic and social institutions. Transnational terrorism can also exacerbate existing conflicts and fuel sectarian tensions, leading to further violence and instability in affected regions. The threat of terrorism also has a significant impact on civil liberties and human rights, as governments may implement security measures that infringe on individual freedoms in the name of counterterrorism. In response to the threat of transnational terrorism, the international community has taken a number of measures to strengthen global counterterrorism efforts. These include enhancing information sharing and intelligence cooperation among countries, improving border security and immigration controls, disrupting terrorist financing networks and addressing the root causes of terrorism through development assistance and capacity-building programs. Multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union have also played a critical role in coordinating international responses to terrorism and promoting dialogue and cooperation among member states. In conclusion, transnational terrorism poses a serious and evolving threat to global security. Its cross-border nature, root causes and implications for international security make it a complex and challenging issue to address. Effective counterterrorism strategies require a comprehensive and coordinated approach that addresses the underlying drivers of terrorism, strengthens international cooperation and upholds respect for human rights and the rule of law. Only through sustained and collective action can the international community hope to contain and ultimately defeat the scourge of transnational terrorism. ■

## INTERVIEW



*In Conversation with*  
**Kamran Shahzad  
Gondal**

**3rd in Punjab; PMS 2022-23**

**“JWT magazine gives aspirants all the information they need”**

**J**ahangir's World Times (JWT): First of all, please tell something about your educational background.

**Kamran Shahzad Gondal (KSG):** I completed my Computer Science graduation in 2018. By the next year, I had a graduation in Political Science as well.

**JWT: How helpful did you find Jahangir's World Times (JWT) in your preparation for the PMS exam?**

**KSG:** Pretty good. JWT magazine gives aspirants all the information they need.

**JWT: What was the significance of newspaper reading in your preparation? How did staying updated with current affairs shape your success?**

**KSG:** One of the most significant factors! I believe newspapers prepare aspirants for not only all the unforeseen aspects of the competitive exams but also help them supplement their answers with contemporary information.

**JWT: What was your overall strategy for cracking the PMS exam?**

**KSG:** Obtaining the best possible score in every paper I attempt. Analyzing comparative, competitive

JWT Editorial Board

margins for all the subjects and evening my score out eventually. Written practice with working on answer presentations for each subject separately was the key.

**JWT: What was your approach to time management throughout the preparation process? How did you balance multiple subjects and cover the vast syllabus?**

**KSG:** Charting out a plan for each subject and simply following that plan. However, it doesn't work out each time. So, I used to make short-term plans to make them more efficient.

Detailed Marks Sheet	
Subject	Marks
<b>Compulsory Subjects</b>	
English Essay	55
English (Précis & Composition)	67
General Knowledge	73
Urdu	70
Pakistan Affairs	63
Islamic Studies	72
<b>Optional Subjects</b>	
1. Political Science	155
2. Philosophy	131
3. Punjabi	129
<b>Total Written</b>	<b>815</b>
Viva Voce	115
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>930</b>

**JWT: What were the challenges you encountered during your preparation journey and the ways in which you overcame them?**

**KSG:** Countering confusion in the adequately correct understanding of essay writing was the first challenge. Learning answer-presentation techniques was the second. I overcame them by analyzing various approaches adopted by my seniors in the civil service.

**JWT: What, in your opinion, is the key to getting through compulsory papers of the PMS exam, especially that of General Knowledge?**

## INTERVIEW

## Advice for Fresh Aspirants

Your best tutor will be the one who tells you how to save your time. If there were only one source to prepare for these exams, it would be the newspapers.



**KSG:** Simple, grammatically correct English with relevant content for both the English papers! For G K , preparing section-wise and revising what you learn for reasonably good times. For Pakistan Studies, a thorough understanding of the subject matter is essential. In the Islamic Studies paper, substantiating the answers with relevant references from the Quran and Sunnah is really, really important.

**JWT:** How should the answers be written to get maximum marks in the written part of the PMS exam?

**KSG:** Write an answer on 7-8 pages, with a good balance of quality and quantity. Writing comprehensive yet compact introduction paragraphs is also the key.

**JWT:** How did you structure your Essay?

**KSG:** I attempted essay on the topic "The cost of inaction is greater than the cost of action." First, I wrote a comprehensive outline spanning 2.5 pages. Started the essay with a brief thesis statement. Next, I wrote concrete arguments that not taking action timely and in an effective manner certainly ends up requiring more cost in terms of money, time, resources and intellectual input. Next, before giving my suggestions, I quoted a few contemporary illustrations of the topic statement.

**JWT:** Since you have scored excellent marks in Précis and GK papers, what was your strategy for both these

## My Interview Experience

I neither could get the opportunity to revise my subjects properly before the interview nor could I manage to give any mock interviews. So, I worked more on the personality part, my job experience and the PMS. I was luckily asked only one question from my subjects. I defended my job experience and IT graduation with relatively satisfactory answers. I feel, I could've made my answers and the interview presentation more engaging by going through some mock interviews. Overall, it was a learning experience.

papers?

**KSG:** I gave equal importance to both the objective and subjective parts of the Précis paper. For GK paper, I went through as many past GK papers of PPSC, PMS and CSS as I could.

**JWT:** Should there be some word limit kept in mind while writing answers?

**KSG:** Don't do anything at the cost of good quality of the answer, and the overall weight of the paper will be worth the time and effort you put in.

## RAPID FIRE

Your inspiration	My father
Attempts	02
Schooling medium	Urdu
Your qualification	BSCS; MA Political Science
Alma mater	University of Sargodha, PU
Your study schedule	6-8 hours a day
Your sources	Recommend readings, Google, You Tube.
Your hobbies	Watching reality TV, playing badminton
Your strength	A sufficient degree of proficiency in writing skills, knowledge base of the syllabus and paper presentation
Fave personality	Tim Cook
Fave book	Greenlights by Matthew McConaughey
Fave quote	"Surround yourself with people whose eyes light up when they see you coming." — André De Shields
Secret of your success	A good degree of proficiency in all the key areas
Your role model	Lee Kuan Yew

**JWT:** How should one choose Optional Subjects?

**KSG:** By evening out your interest in the subject and its compatibility to your education!

**JWT:** As interviewers usually grill the interview candidates, how did you manage the situation?

**KSG:** Good communication skills would steer things in your favour in many ways.

**JWT:** Who deserves the credit for your success?

**KSG:** Every single person I learned from. ☐

## Selection of optional subjects

Balance your interest in the subject and academic familiarity with the syllabus of that.

## Notes-Making

Make sure you have, at least, a brief version of the notes at your disposal.

## Revision

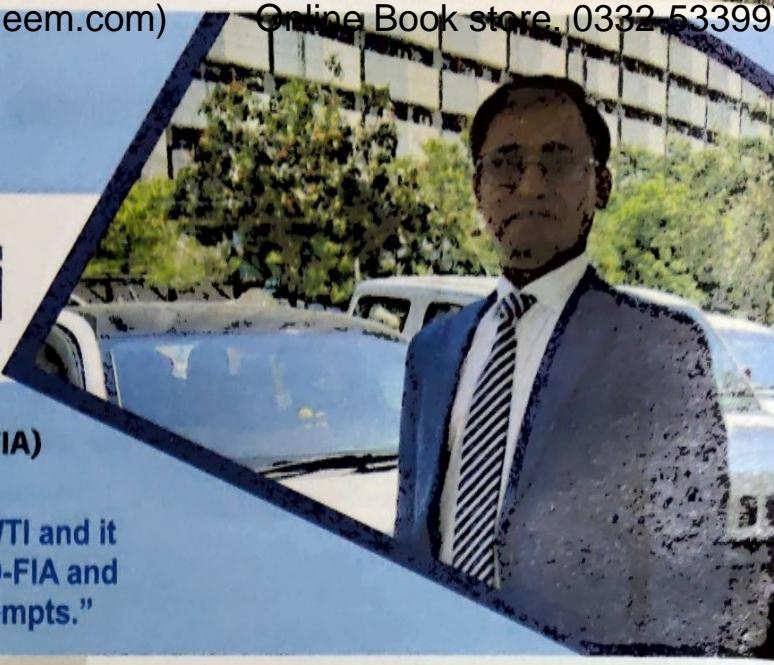
As many times as you can!

## My Tips on

# Imdad Ali

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
(Federal Investigation Agency - FIA)  
1st in Sindh**

**"I joined written mock series at WTI and it helped me to crack PMS-2020, AD-FIA and Inspector FIA exams in first attempts."**



JWT Edit. Board

**Jahangir's World Times (JWT): Please tell us about your educational background.**

**Imdad Ali (IA):** I did my matriculation from Larkana and then earned a degree in Electrical Engineering from Mehran UET, Jamshoro.

**JWT: How long did it take you to prepare for Assistant Director FIA exam?**

**IA:** I have been preparing for competitive exams since 2020. After failure in my first CSS attempt in 2022, I appeared in various exams. Luckily, I have been recommended as Assistant Director FIA in my first general exam through FPSC.



**JWT: What were your principal resources for the preparation for this exam?**

**IA:** For English, I relied on various sources including books, magazines and newspapers, as well as the Internet.

**JWT: How was your experience at the World Times Institute?**

**IA:** I am very thankful to WTI for polishing my writing skills and practice. I joined written mock series at WTI and it helped me to crack PMS-2020, AD-FIA and Inspector FIA exams in my first attempts.

**JWT: How should the new aspirants start preparations for the various one-paper exams?**

**IA:** New aspirants should focus on English. Reading, writing and learning grammar should be their prime focus. Besides English, they must learn prominent historical events, economic terms, political systems and ongoing international issues.

**JWT: What areas should they focus on?**

**IA:** English, Pakistan and Current Affairs, General Science and Ability.

**JWT: What is, in your opinion, an ideal timetable for sound preparation?**

**IA:** It varies from individual to individual. In my opinion, for an average but hardworking person, a daily study for 7-9 hours is enough. This will be further reduced to 4 hours after the first attempt. If a CSS aspirant has well prepared compulsory subjects, then it will be very easy to crack any screening and descriptive exams.

**JWT: What strategy should the in-job aspirants follow as they have scant time at their disposal?**

**IA:** If they can, they should bring books to workplace and use the spare time to read. It is all about managing time. You can study 3-4 hours while at office and then go back home and sleep for two hours. You can again study for 3-4 hours at night before going to sleep.

**JWT: How did you handle the interview pressure while before the panel?**

**IA:** In the beginning, I felt nervous, but the panellists created a friendly environment. This allowed me to relax and thenceforth, I didn't even think about the interview pressure. It was just giving crisp and relevant answers. I believe the interview pressure can be minimized through mock interviews and assessments, as it allows one to be prepared for the actual interview.

**JWT: Please share some questions the panellists asked during the interview.**

**IA:** The panellists asked many token questions on Indo-Pak history, economic terms, world organisations and USA history.

**JWT: On the basis of your experience, what tips you would give to the prospective aspirants?**

**IA:** Targeted study, relevant materials, time management and good paper presentation. ■

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Aftab Abbasi

## Joining Russia's INTSC



**A whole world of new opportunities for Pakistan**

In what can be called a groundbreaking diplomatic move, Pakistan has agreed to join the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a significant transport initiative spanning more than 7,200 kilometers, following an invitation from Russian President Vladimir Putin, and has commenced the accession process. In his 2023 State of the Union Address, President Putin had announced: "We will develop Black Sea and Sea of Azov ports. We will pay special attention to the North-South international corridor, as those who work on this every day know. Vessels with a draft of up to 4.5 meters will be able to pass through the Volga-Caspian Sea Canal this year. This will open up new routes for business cooperation with India, Iran, Pakistan, and the Middle Eastern countries. We will continue developing this corridor."

### Introduction

The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is the ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between India, Russia, Iran, Europe, and Central Asia. The primary goal of INSTC is to enhance connectivity and promote trade and economic cooperation among these regions. Its development is part of broader efforts to improve regional connectivity and economic integration in Eurasia. It holds the potential to reshape trade dynamics and contribute to the economic development of the participating countries while offering alternative trade routes for global commerce.

### Background

It is to be noted here that this corridor is not a new concept; this ancient route was used by European, Indian, and many other foreign traders to reach out to the Central Asian markets. For example, during the time of the Safavid dynasty - one of the most significant ruling dynasties of Persia (modern Iran) from 1501 to 1736 - it is estimated that around 10,000 Indian traders were spread across the empire. The new corridor is 7,200 kilometers long and has a

multimodal transportation network which includes sea, rail and road routes. The corridor is 30 percent cheaper and 40 percent shorter than the old route.

### Evolution of the idea

The idea of the modern INSTC was conceived during a conference on transport in Saint Petersburg on September 12, 2000. The idea was to build a transport corridor linking

On June 19, Pakistan's Ambassador to Russia, Muhammad Khalid Jamali, announced Pakistan's acceptance of Russian President Vladimir Putin's invitation to join the North-South International Transport Corridor, the ship, rail, and road route for moving freight from South Asia to Europe through Central Asia, the Caucasus and Russia. This network will be used for transport between Iran, India, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Central Asian countries, and Northern Europe, connecting roads and rail routes with ports in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea regions.

Russia's Baltic Sea coast to India's western ports in the Arabian Sea via Iran. Russia, India and Iran signed preliminary agreements to develop the corridor in 2002. The objective of the corridor is to reduce the time of delivery of goods from India to Russia, as well as to Northern and Western Europe. Indian goods are transported to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf and shipped across the Caspian Sea for onward rail/road transport to Russia, Europe and Central Asian States. The corridor is the best alternate to Suez Canal route which is 16,000 kilometers long which follows Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Baltic Sea and Saint Petersburg (Russia) in 40 days. Three years later, in 2005, Azerbaijan signed up for the project. This agreement was eventually ratified by 13 countries — India, Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Tajikistan, Turkiye and Ukraine.

The commencement of the first commercial consignment through INSTC in July 2022 marked a historic milestone.

### Aims & objectives

The INSTC is designed to provide an alternative and shorter trade route between South Asia and Northern Europe. It connects the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and further extends to Northern and Western Europe. The route primarily involves moving freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia via ship, rail, and road. The objective of the

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corridor is to increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Astrakhan, Bandar Anzali etc. As per the agreement of 2002, the main objectives of this route are:

- increasing effectiveness of transport ties to organize goods and passenger transport along the International 'North-South' transport corridor;
- the promotion of access to the international market through rail, road, sea, river, and air transport of the State Parties to this agreement; and
- providing security of travel and safety of goods
- harmonization of transport policies as well as law and legislative basis in the field of transport to implement this Agreement.

**Members**

The current members are:

India, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Belarus, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Syria, Turkiye, Ukraine, and Bulgaria (observer).

Turkmenistan currently is not a formal member but is likely to have road connectivity to the corridor.

Azerbaijan and Armenia are heavily involved in the project with both countries currently building new train lines and roads to complete the missing links in the NSTC.

**Potential benefits for Pakistan**

Just like CPEC, Russia's International North-South Transport Corridor could prove to be a game-changer in terms of economic benefits. That is why Pakistan is considering using the Silk Road in the International Transport Corridor alongside CPEC. Discussions are also underway with the Russian Federation on timber imports and enhancing cooperation in the modern furniture industry.

The INTSC will add impetus to the efforts to strengthen and expand Pakistan's ties with Russia. Pakistan has successfully imported one million tons of Russian crude oil recently. Discussions are ongoing to promote mutual cooperation in agriculture between Pakistan

and the Russian Federation. Moreover, Pakistan's first shipment of kinnows was transported to the Russian Republic of Dagestan via Iran and Azerbaijan.

The rail route from Iran and Azerbaijan to Russia, including Pakistan, could be crucial for increasing trade in the region. The project is expected to strengthen Pakistan's relations with countries in the region, including Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia, among others.

Moreover, Pakistan has been developing its ties with Central Asian Republics (CARs) for the pursuit of its economic interest vis-à-vis regional stability. Pakistan provides the shortest possible route to the CARs, helping the landlocked states to connect with the global economy. With the establishment of linkages in the Central Asian region, Pakistan would overcome its future energy challenges.

Furthermore, Gwadar Port has the potential to maximise Pakistan's oceanic trade volume. The increase in cargo arrival and departure capacity is expected to double, with a per year increase of up to 400 million tons. At the initial stage, Pakistan can transport five million tonnes of cargo through the corridor. It will reduce transaction costs for Chinese industries given its proximity to Xinjiang province. The Xinjiang province connects the rest of the CARs and accounts for 80 percent of the total Chinese trade volume. In addition, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) believes that the exchange of goods and trade could be transited from Central Asia to Gwadar. The development of new ports would unlock the energy and trade potential of the entire region.

Pakistan can also benefit from the corridor if Gwadar is linked with Chabahar and Zahedan from Taftan through railway line to connect with Europe.

**Conclusion**

The revival of Silk Route connectivity, the development of transport corridors, and the improvement of links increase regional cooperation and can be considered a major tool for transport and trade developments. There is a major developed market that surrounds this region, which can be easily connected through the INSTC. A regional cooperation

agreement helps remove many potential obstacles. Transport corridors can indeed contribute significantly to developing trade and transit among the countries of the region. The significance of the transport corridor is that it provides a platform for improving cooperation as well as communications, and reduces barriers to permit the economies of each country to grow independently and achieve objectives for the benefit of the country and the region as a whole. □

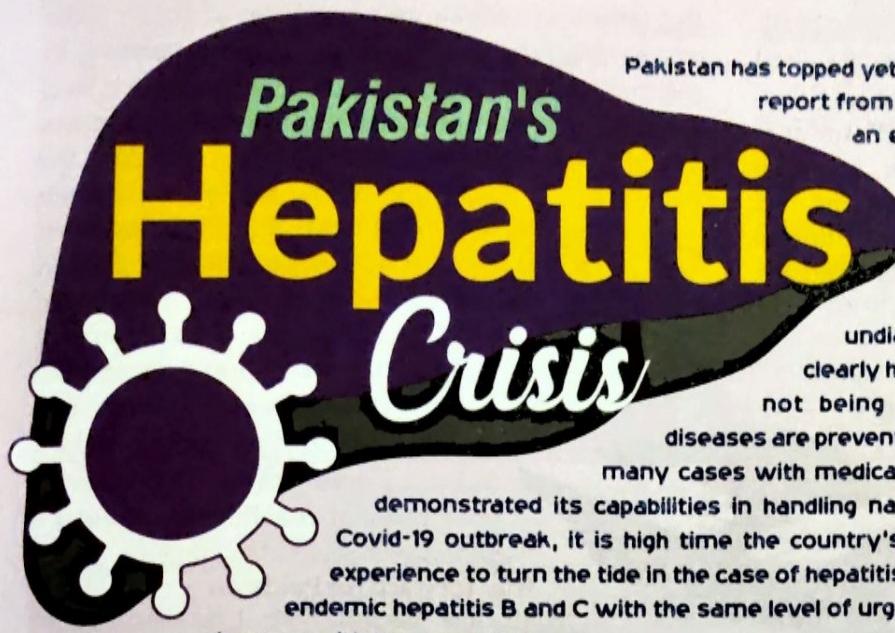
*The writer is a member of staff.*

**Components: The project has a number of components -**

1. Northern and Western Europe
2. Russian Federation, Caucasus
3. Persian Gulf (Western route)
4. Central Asia - Persian Gulf (Eastern route)
5. Caspian Sea - Iran Persian Gulf (Central route)

>**Funding for the Project:** While India has backed the development of the port, free trade zone and railway line at Chabahar, Azerbaijan has come to Iran's aid to expedite the completion of the Iranian section of the corridor. Moreover, multilateral organisations are stepping in to support the INSTC in different ways.

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Magazine Desk

The 2024 Global Hepatitis Report, which was recently released by the World Health Organisation (WHO), has flagged Pakistan as the country with the highest number of hepatitis C cases in the world and fifth overall in terms of the prevalence of the hepatitis B and C variants combined. The Report says that Pakistan had the highest number of viral hepatitis C infections in the world, around 8.8 million, and accounts for 44 percent of all new hepatitis C infections attributed to unsafe medical injections. In previous years, Egypt reported the largest number of hepatitis C and B cases, followed by Pakistan.

#### Key findings of the Report

- The latest data show that viral hepatitis is a major public health challenge of this decade, and the world is still far from achieving its elimination by 2030.
- About 1.3 million people died of viral hepatitis in 2022, similar to the number of deaths caused by tuberculosis. Viral hepatitis and tuberculosis were the second leading causes of death among communicable diseases in 2022, after Covid-19.
- Combined, hepatitis B and C cause 3500 deaths per day, and mortality is increasing.
- An estimated 254 million people are living with hepatitis B and 50 million people are living with hepatitis C worldwide, and 6000

people are newly infected with viral hepatitis each day.

- Data from 187 countries show the estimated number of deaths from viral hepatitis increased from 1.1 million in 2019 to 1.3 million in 2022.
  - Of these, 83% of deaths were caused by hepatitis B and 17% by hepatitis C.
- The estimated number of people newly infected by viral hepatitis declined from 2.5 million in 2019 to 2.2 million in 2022.
  - Of the 2.2 million new infections, 1.2 million were hepatitis B and nearly 1.0 million hepatitis C.
- Overall, about 304 million people were living with viral hepatitis B and C in 2022.
  - An estimated 254 million were living with hepatitis B and 50 million were living with hepatitis C.
- Half the burden of chronic hepatitis B and C infection is among people 30-54 years old; and men account for 58% of all cases. An estimated 12% of the burden is among children, in particular for hepatitis B.
- Ten countries account for nearly two-thirds of the global burden of viral hepatitis B and C, with Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Philippines and the Russian Federation rounding off the top ten.

- For hepatitis C, six countries — China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Russian Federation and US — represent 50pc of the global burden.
- The global response is off-track towards 2030 goals. If action is taken now, universal access to viral hepatitis interventions will have a major public health impact — reducing incidence by 90%, mortality by 65% and the costs of achieving global targets by 15%.

### Analysis

Pakistan's resilience in healthcare has been questionable and unidentifiable since long. But, what is more concerning are the periodic spikes in health crises stemming from catastrophes like natural climate disasters and mismanaged healthcare system, leading to unavoidable epidemics and endemics.

It comes as no surprise that Pakistan leads the world in viral hepatitis C infections. In 2016, the WHO pledged to eradicate hepatitis C virus as part of the 2030 Strategy. However, the condition was placed in timely diagnosis and treatment with direct-acting antivirals. In Pakistan, despite the availability of direct-acting antivirals, accompanied by subsidised treatments, the pervasiveness of hepatitis C remains intact, with no evidence of decline, so much so that we now top the world in the prevalence of the disease.

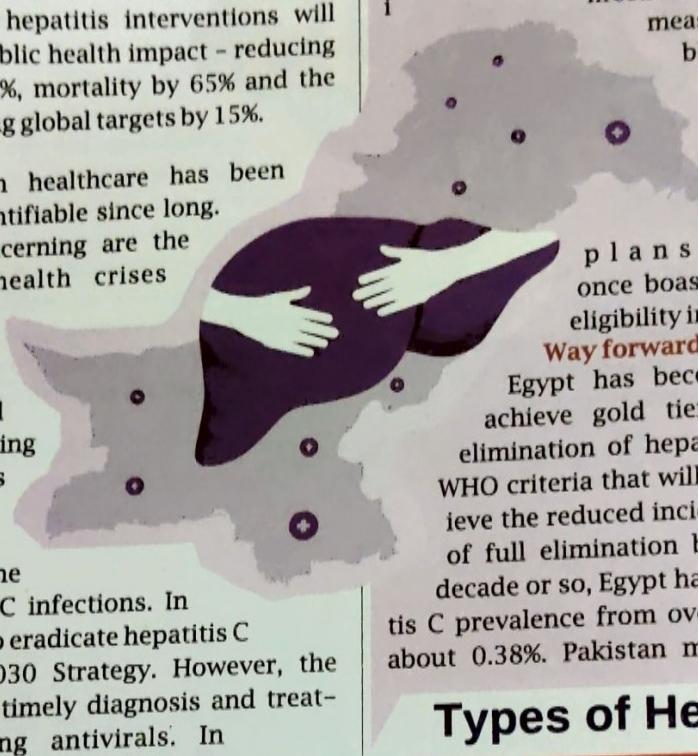
Pakistan is already on decline in healthcare system and offers no hope for reversion of the situation. One of the primary reasons for this plight is the absence of a comprehensive, wide-reaching screening programme to identify the disease, especially in a timely fashion. As thousands of new patients are added every year to the pool of the virus, not enough is offered for their treatment due to delayed initial diagnosis of hepatitis C signs and symp-

toms.

The national plan developed to combat hepatitis C by the Imran Khan government demonstrated high level of political and professional leadership commitment. The plan aimed to align diagnosis and treatment of the infection with parallel healthcare measures such as screened blood transfusion and organ transplants. Today, as Pakistan jolts the world by topping all in the prevalence of the disease, the ambitious plans and policy that Pakistan once boasted redefine the country's eligibility in crisis management.

### Way forward for Pakistan

Egypt has become the first country to achieve gold tier status on the path to elimination of hepatitis C, based on fulfilling WHO criteria that will set the country up to achieve the reduced incidence and mortality targets of full elimination before 2030. Over the last decade or so, Egypt has been able to slash hepatitis C prevalence from over 10% of its population to about 0.38%. Pakistan must take inspiration from



## Types of Hepatitis

	TRANSMISSION	PREVENTION	TREATMENT
Hepatitis A	Eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practicing good hygiene</li> <li>Vaccine</li> </ul>	No treatment
Hepatitis B	Through contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practicing good hygiene</li> <li>Vaccine</li> <li>Blood screening</li> </ul>	Alpha interferon Peginterferon
Hepatitis C	Blood-to-blood contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practicing good hygiene</li> <li>Avoid sharing needles, toothbrushes, razors or nail scissors</li> </ul>	Direct-acting antiviral drugs
Hepatitis D	Contact with infected blood (only occurs in people already infected with hepatitis B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hepatitis B vaccine</li> <li>Avoid sharing needles, toothbrushes, razors or nail scissors</li> </ul>	Interferon
Hepatitis E	Eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practicing good hygiene</li> <li>Avoid drinking water that has come from a potentially unsafe source</li> </ul>	No treatment

Egypt which, in previous years, used to rank ahead of Pakistan in terms of hepatitis B and C prevalence. However, starting in 2014, the country launched a national campaign offering free testing and treatment for hepatitis C. This ambitious project utilized a massive network of over 6,000 fixed testing sites and 8,000 mobile teams, reaching even the remote areas. Testing and treatment were made widely accessible and free of charge. This eliminated financial barriers and encouraged participation in the program. Egypt negotiated lower prices for direct-acting antiviral [DAA] treatments, the most effective drugs for HCV.

the eradication of hepatitis from Pakistan. They assert that in a country where around 15 million people are affected by hepatitis B and C, the National Database & Registration Authority (Nadra) should make hepatitis B and C screening mandatory for the registration and renewal of computerised national identity cards (CNICs). They also demand that all the Union Councils and Nadra link the issuance of birth certificates and B Forms with mandatory administration of hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of a child's birth as, at present, hardly three percent babies are administered the vaccine at birth.

## 10 actions to advance a public health approach

The actions are organized within the framework of the five strategic directions of the WHO global health sector strategies on, respectively, HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections 2022–2030 (4). Implementing these actions will be critical to advance the global health response towards the goal of the strategies to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030.

### Strategic Direction 1

Deliver high-quality, evidence based, people-centred services

**Action 1.** Testing: expand access to high-quality, affordable viral hepatitis testing and diagnostics services

**Action 2.** Treatment: shift from policies to implementation for equitable access to viral hepatitis treatment and care

**Action 3.** Prevention: strengthen investment in primary prevention of viral hepatitis to bridge the coverage gap in pregnancy, especially in Africa.

### Strategic Direction 2:

Optimize systems, sectors and partnerships for impact

**Action 4.** Service delivery: simplify and decentralize the delivery of viral hepatitis services through a public health approach

**Action 5.** Product regulation, procurement and supply:

optimize product registration, procurement and supply, improve market transparency and support local production

**Action 6.** Investment cases: develop investment cases in priority countries to rapidly shift to a public health approach

**Action 7.** Financing: mobilize innovative financing from all sources

### Strategic Direction 3:

Generate and use data to drive decisions for action

**Action 8.** Data for action: use improved country data and strengthen country data systems and accountability for viral hepatitis

### Strategic Direction 4:

Engage empowered communities and civil society

**Action 9.** Community engagement: engage affected populations and civil society in the viral hepatitis response for advocacy and service delivery

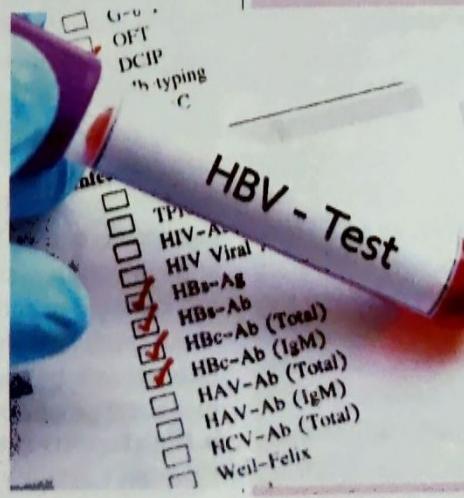
### Strategic Direction 5:

Foster innovations for impact

**Action 10.** Innovation: advance the research agenda for viral hepatitis to improve diagnostics and work towards a hepatitis B cure

This not only improved affordability but also drove down global DAA prices, benefiting other countries. It tested more than 60m people and treated more than 4m, of which 99pc were cured with locally manufactured antiviral treatments. Its enviable progress was made possible thanks to the rigorous implementation of improved patient safety practices and the implementation of universal injection and blood safety procedures. This is precisely the approach Pakistan needs to adopt.

Experts have suggested another step that can be very effective in



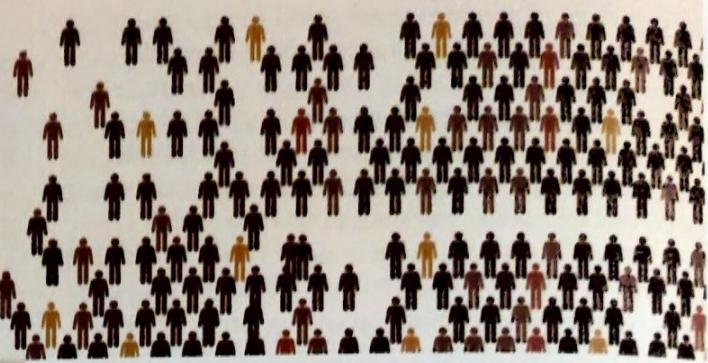
## Conclusion

Hepatitis B and C are major public health concerns in Pakistan. While the government has committed to

eliminating these diseases, significant challenges remain. Achieving elimination requires overcoming obstacles like a lack of comprehensive national data on the issue, limited access to testing and treatment facilities and inadequate public awareness. Moreover, increased access to testing, treatment and public education campaigns are crucial for achieving this goal. ■

# Pakistan's Population Explosion

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The recently released Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-24 has reported that the population of Pakistan has increased by 16.3 percent to 241.5 million, compared to the population in 2017 (excluding Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan). The population growth rate at the national level is 2.55 percent. The population density increased from 260.88 persons per square km in 2017 to 303 persons per square km in 2023. These figures show that the country is faced with a huge population explosion which, if left uncontrolled and unregulated, will be detrimental to the socioeconomic development of Pakistan. So, the government needs to pay instant attention to this burning issue and create public awareness about it by utilizing all available resources.



Population explosion is one of the biggest challenges faced by Pakistan at the moment. According to data from Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-24, with a population of over 241 million, Pakistan ranks as the world's fifth most populous nation. The Survey further reports that based on the data from the 7th National Population and Housing Census, the country's overall population has increased by 16.3 percent from 2017, reaching a total of more than 241.5 million people. If measures are not taken to control the population of the country, it would grow to 360 million by 2050. In the following write-up, we will take a look at the issue of population explosion in Pakistan.

#### **Understanding population growth in Pakistan**

Pakistan's population has been experiencing exponential growth over the past few decades. It has increased more than threefold in the last 50 years, largely due to high fertility and growth rates. According to the UN, Pakistan's population is projected to reach 403 million by 2050 if the current growth rate continues unchecked.

#### **Major causes**

Several factors contribute to this increase, including high birth rates, limited access to family planning services, cultural norms and religious beliefs. Socio-cultural factors such as early marriage and strong male child preference also lead to more births.

**Dr. Hassaan Bin Zubair**

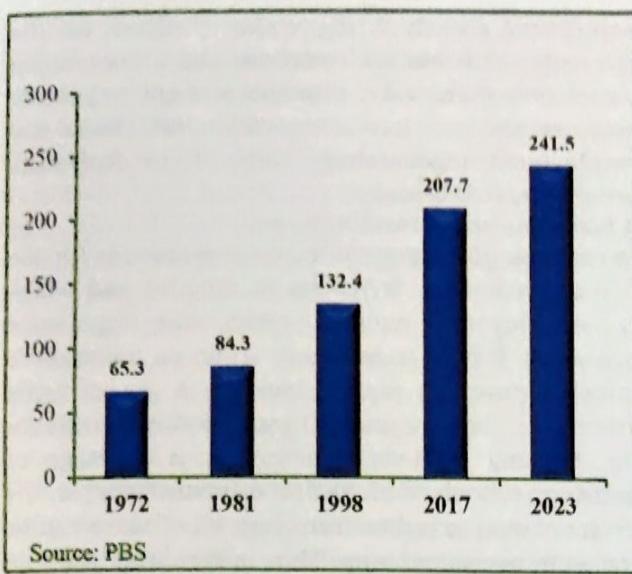
Patriarchy and the resultant lack of female sexual and reproductive autonomy too have significantly contributed towards a higher fertility rate in Pakistan. Culturally, children, particularly sons, are considered an asset and a gift of God. Also, the reduction in death rate due to better nutrition and medical facilities and improved life expectancy since independence has also added to the overall size of the population. Here is a brief on these causes:

#### **a. Lack of family planning and birth control**

The lack of sufficient family planning and birth control measures stands as a significant factor contributing to the country's rapid population growth. A prevalent issue, particularly in rural areas, is the limited awareness and reluctance to adopt modern contraceptive methods. As a result, many families have larger numbers of children than they can adequately support. The absence of accessible family planning services and comprehensive education on reproductive health leads to unintended pregnancies and exacerbates the strain on resources, healthcare and education systems. Empowering individuals with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions about family planning will not only help curb population growth but will also improve the overall well-being and prosperity of Pakistan's people.

#### **b. High fertility rates**

Pakistan's fertility rate is among the highest in the

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region. The last population census has shown that Pakistan has moved up the ladder by becoming the fifth-most populous nation - only behind India, China, the United States and Indonesia. It is an alarming situation, especially considering the extent of poverty in the country. Interestingly, other Muslim countries like Bangladesh and Iran have successfully controlled their populations; that is also reflected in their improved human development indicators. With few efforts going into family planning, there is no sign of the population growth rate coming down significantly. At this rate, Pakistan may well become the world's fourth most populous nation by 2030, surpassing Indonesia.

High fertility exacerbates food insecurity and malnutrition, which results in children under the age of 5 being 40% stunted, 18% wasted and 29% underweight. According to National Nutrition Survey 2018, a total of 36.9% households are food insecure in Pakistan.

#### **c. High infant mortality rate**

Historically, Pakistan has grappled with high infant mortality rates, primarily attributed to limited access to adequate healthcare and sanitation facilities. This unfortunate reality compelled families to have larger numbers of children, as they hoped some would survive to adulthood. While progress has been made in

recent years to improve healthcare and reduce infant mortality, this past reality continues to influence population growth patterns. The fear of losing children at a young age still resonates with many families, leading to a preference for larger family sizes as a form of insurance against the uncertainties of infant survival. By ensuring better survival prospects for infants, Pakistan can gradually shift towards a more sustainable population growth trajectory.

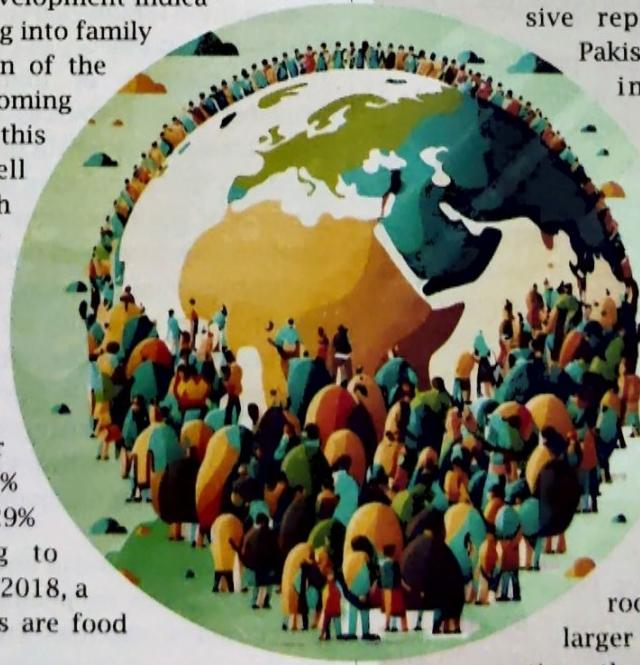
#### **d. Low literacy rate and education**

The persistently low literacy rate, particularly among women, plays a significant role in driving higher population growth. The lack of access to education limits individuals' understanding of the importance of family planning and reproductive health. Educated individuals are more likely to comprehend the benefits of smaller family sizes, leading to informed decisions about family planning and birth control. However, the prevailing educational disparities, particularly in rural and marginalised communities, hinder the dissemination of crucial information about reproductive health and family planning. Empowering both men and women with education and knowledge is essential to breaking the cycle of high population growth. By investing in quality education, promoting gender equality and advocating for comprehensive reproductive health education,

Pakistan can pave the way for a more informed and empowered society, contributing to sustainable population management and overall development.

#### **e. Social and cultural norms**

Social and cultural norms have a profound impact on shaping reproductive behaviours, particularly in certain communities where having many children is seen as a symbol of prestige and family honor. These deep-rooted traditions often prioritize larger family sizes, perpetuating the notion that having numerous children signifies prosperity and social standing. Consequently, there is limited acceptance and understanding of family planning methods within these communities. Challenging these norms requires sensitively addressing cultural beliefs and engaging community leaders to promote awareness about the benefits of



Population Indicators		million
Indicators	Population Census 2017	Population Census 2023
Population	207.68	241.50
Households	32.20	38.34
Average Household size	6.39	6.30
Rural Population	132.01	147.75
Urban Population	75.67	93.75
Population growth (%)	2.40	2.55
Population growth (Urban)	3.01	3.65
Population growth (Rural)	2.07	1.90
Population Density/sq.km	260.88	303

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

smaller family sizes and comprehensive family planning. Encouraging open dialogues about reproductive health and breaking the stigma surrounding birth control can empower individuals to make informed choices about their family size, contributing to a more sustainable population growth in Pakistan. By combining culturally sensitive approaches with education and advocacy, the nation can gradually shift away from excessive population growth and foster a society where reproductive decisions are based on informed choices rather than social pressures.

#### f. Religious beliefs and practices

In Pakistan, religious beliefs and practices play a significant role in influencing population growth. As a country where religion holds immense significance in the lives of its people, certain interpretations of religious teachings may encourage larger families. Some religious beliefs emphasise the importance of procreation and view children as a blessing and a source of divine favor. Consequently, these interpretations may contribute to a cultural preference for larger family sizes within religious communities. It is essential to recognize the sensitivity of religious beliefs and engage in constructive dialogue to promote understanding about family planning and reproductive health. By fostering a balanced approach that respects religious values while also advocating for informed reproductive choices, Pakistan can work towards addressing population growth in a way that is culturally respectful and sustainable. Education and awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in highlighting the importance of family planning and empowering individuals to make decisions that align with their religious beliefs and personal circumstances.

#### Challenges of overpopulation

One of the most significant repercussions of rapid

population growth is the strain it places on the economy. With limited resources and a burgeoning population, there is a continuous struggle to provide essential services such as education, healthcare and employment opportunities. Some of the challenges are enumerated below:

#### a. Economy and infrastructure

Overpopulation has significant consequences for the national economy. It results in massive and widespread poverty, unemployment and large-scale migration. It puts an immense strain on the nation's infrastructure. No matter how much governments attempt to; they are unable to sufficiently provide for the teeming millions. Whether it is shortage of housing, schools and health infrastructure or the overcrowding in public transport; all of these can be traced to overpopulation. This, in turn, can lead to a crisis of governance amid citizens' unfulfilled aspirations.

#### b. National security

The rapid growth of the population also poses serious risks to internal security. With the economy shrinking, national security is bound to be significantly impacted by the country's rapidly rising population. The National Security Policy, announced at the beginning of 2022, rightly recognized human security as a precondition for internal security.

The Malthusian theory of population states that when the productivity of human beings increases, it provides more resources and a better standard of living for a society which increases the population but gradually that population offsets the productivity and the rate of the population becomes greater than the productivity. Increased population causes an increase in consumption whereas a decrease in output per person. This trajectory ultimately culminates in the Malthusian catastrophe, whereby nature itself resorts to positive checks to restore equilibrium between population and subsistence, engendering misery and sorrow. These positive checks are war, conflicts, drought, flood, famine, pandemic, etc.

#### c. Social issues

A large population can also be socially disruptive. It can lead to the deepening of social cleavages and foment social conflicts. For instance, it leads to the development of slums in urban areas where the residents lead a sub-human existence. It may induce a sense of relative deprivation amongst the disprivileged; resulting in crime, protests and social movements.

#### d. Environmental pollution

A large population is also responsible for environmental pollution, deforestation and ecological

degradation. Pakistan's rapid population growth has led to growth in demand for food, water, housing and energy, leading to resource scarcity and environmental degradation. The mounting population has significant environmental implications, giving rise to increased waste generation and pollution, which, in turn, exacerbates environmental degradation and contributes to the effects of climate change. With more people producing waste and demanding resources, the pressure on natural ecosystems intensifies. Improper waste management practices strain the environment, as landfills overflow and pollution contaminate air, water and soil.

#### e. Pressure on resources

With expanding population, the demand for essential resources such as water, food and energy has reached unprecedented levels, exerting immense strain on the country's already limited natural reserves. The growing needs of its people are putting a considerable burden on the infrastructure and the environment,

The country has a large population of young people and a strategic location that can be leveraged for trade and investment. Pakistan is surrounded by major markets such as China, India and the Middle East, which can provide access to a wide range of goods and services. Additionally, the government's efforts to improve infrastructure and attract foreign investment may also contribute to this growth.

#### The way forward

By addressing population growth, Pakistan can enhance social stability, foster harmony and increase cooperation among its diverse communities. And, one of the most effective ways to counter this challenge is to reduce the growth rate of population. However, doing so warrants a multi-faceted approach, which must include the following elements:

1. Implementing robust family planning programmes to raise awareness and provide accessible contraceptives.
2. Promoting education and awareness campaigns to enlighten the public about the advantages of smaller family sizes.
3. Focusing on empowering women through education, employment opportunities and healthcare access.
4. Prioritizing economic development to create jobs and improve living standards, discouraging large family sizes.
5. Enforcing policies that incentivize smaller families and penalize unchecked population growth.

#### Conclusion

Pakistan is sitting on a potential demographic disaster, with more than half of its population under 25 years of age. This high number of young people is the face of today's Pakistan. With an extremely low literacy rate and bleak job opportunities, the future prospects of the young generation are uncertain and dark. The high population growth rates and a huge youth bulge have created an extremely dangerous situation for Pakistan. We could have used our demographic power to turn around the country's economy, but with little investment in education and slow economic growth, the youth bulge is fast becoming a liability and a serious threat to the country's internal security.

Pakistan's multiple woes, from poverty to climate change, are exacerbated by unchecked population growth. We must act now to unlock Pakistan's potential and address the social and economic challenges that lie ahead.

*The writer is a PhD in English (Literature).  
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Province - wise Population		million
Area	Population 2017	Population 2023
Punjab	109.99	127.68
Sindh	47.85	55.69
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	35.50	40.85
Balochistan	12.34	14.89
Islamabad	2.00	2.36
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>207.68</b>	<b>241.50</b>

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

threatening the sustainability and equilibrium of vital ecosystems.

#### Opportunities

Although a large population is usually seen as a problem, it does provide some opportunities.

A large population also means a large and cheap labour force, necessary to fuel economic growth. For the next three decades, we can reap the demographic dividend for Pakistan. A large population also means a huge market for various products and services, from mobiles to two-wheelers and FMCG products. This means that Pakistani firms can always access the huge domestic market, even if other economies hit a recession. It also makes Pakistan an attractive investment destination for global investors and attracts much needed FDI. Given the large market size, firms can achieve economies of scale.

# The Holy Prophet (PBUH)

## The Perfect Role Model

... for a Military Strategist

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Muhammad Asim Jasra



The Holy Prophet (PBUH) migrated to Madina because the infidels of Makkah had made his life difficult. The Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) fought 27 wars in a short span of 10 years, starting from migration to Madina in 622 AD to breathing his last in 632 AD. He (PBUH) was able to conquer the Arabian Peninsula, thanks to his military acumen, tactical approach, courage, unwavering faith in Allah Almighty and divine help. Given his unrivalled victories, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is indeed a role model for all the military strategists in the world.

### Difference between a Ghazwa and a Sariyyah

A military expedition in which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) personally participated is called a Ghazwa, and a military expedition in which he did not physically participate but was carried out on his orders is called a Sariyyah.

There are a total of 27 Ghazwat and 73 Sarayas.

### Raising an army of brave and courageous soldiers

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) taught the Muslims that martyrdom is better than fleeing from the battlefield. It was the impact of his teachings that his followers were courageous, fearless and ready to sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah.

### Focus on military preparedness and training

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) always focused on military preparedness and training, even during peacetime. He

(PBUH) always took minute details into consideration.

### The purpose of wars fought by the Prophet (PBUH)

Earlier, wars were fought for the purpose of settling personal scores, looting wealth, gaining worldly power and taking revenge. The purpose of the wars fought by the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) was the defence of the Muslims, the dominance of Islam and eliminating injustices and oppression from society. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) fought wars for a greater cause. Let us have a look at the military strategy of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in different wars.

### The Battle of Badr

This was the first Ghazwa of Islam fought on 17th of Ramadan in 2 AH (March 15, 624). A trade caravan of Quraysh, led by Abu Sufyan, was returning from Syria. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) planned to ambush this caravan. Somehow, the Quraysh came to know about this imminent attack. As many as 1000 Makkans departed for Madina under the command of Abu Jahl to protect the caravan. Abu Sufyan, however, managed his trade caravan to escape the attack and reach Makkah safely. At this point, Abu Jahl, instead of returning to Makkah without war, decided to wage a war against the Muslims. Nonetheless, 300-400 Makkans returned to Makkah without fighting, leaving behind 600-700 of their fellows.

The strength of the Muslim army was 313 men, while the logistics available with it were only two swords, two horses and 70 camels.

Notwithstanding the numerical majority of Quraysh, Muslims defeated them owing to divine help and an effective military strategy drawn up by Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). In this battle, 14 Sahaba (RA) were martyred, while 70 of the infidels of Makkah were killed. As many as 70 infidels were made captives. Important leaders from Quraysh like Abu Jahl, Utbah bin Rabeea and Umayyah bin Khalaf were among those who were killed.

#### **Prophet's (PBUH) military strategy**

##### **a. Mutual consultation**

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) consulted his companions regarding the war strategy. In this way, he (PBUH) made it the teamwork of both the Muhajirs and Ansars.

##### **b. Swiftness**

Muslims took a difficult mountainous route to reach the battlefield of Badr before the Makkans. This swiftness enabled the Muslim army to occupy the water resources and strategic place on the battlefield.

##### **c. Occupying water resources**

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) occupied water resources and prevented the army of Quraysh from taking water from these.

##### **d. Occupying strategic place**

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) occupied a higher place in the battlefield and arranged the Muslim army in such a way that the sun was at the backside of them while the sunlight directly beamed into the eyes of enemy soldiers.

##### **e. Intelligence gathering**

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave due attention to intelligence gathering, which is an important component of a prudent military strategy. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) gathered intelligence about the opposing army's strength, location and plans.

##### **f. Seeking divine help**

Seeking divine help was an important component of the military strategy of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

##### **The Battle of Uhud**

The Quraysh prepared for another war in order to take revenge for their humiliating defeat in the Battle of Badr. The Battle of Uhud, then, took place in the valley of Mount Uhud near Madina on March 23, 625 (3 AH). As many as 700 Muslims fought against 3000 infidels who were being led by Abu Sufyan (he had, by then, not embraced Islam) - Abdullah Bin Ubayy, chief of the hypocrites, along with his 300 soldiers, had abandoned the Muslim army, reducing its strength from

1000 to 700.

#### **Prophet's (PBUH) military strategy**

##### **a. Mutual consultation**

The decision to face the army of Abu Sufyan outside the precincts of Madina was taken by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) on the basis of consultation with his companions (RA). The Holy Prophet (PBUH) did not change this decision despite the fact that Abdullah Bin Ubayy disagreed with this plan and left the Muslim army along with his 300 soldiers.

##### **b. Appointment of 50 archers on a strategic place**

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) appointed 50 archers under the command of Hazrat Abdullah bin Jubair (RA) on a nearby mountain to guard the Muslim army from that side and instructed them not to leave, until his orders, that place

#### **Muhammed's (PBUH) commands in Wars**

<b>Don't cut a tree</b>		<b>Don't kill a woman</b>	
<b>Don't kill a child</b>		<b>Don't kill a sick person</b>	
<b>Don't kill old people</b>		<b>Don't kill a monk or a priest</b>	
<b>Don't destroy a temple or a church</b>		<b>Don't disfigure the dead</b>	
<b>Don't destroy a building</b>		<b>Don't kill an animal except for eating</b>	
<b>Don't kill those who surrendered</b>		<b>Be good to the prisoners and feed them</b>	
<b>Don't kill who ran away</b>		<b>Don't enforce Islam</b>	

come what may. These archers, however, left their place when they saw the army of infidels fleeing from the battlefield and got engaged in collecting the bounties. This situation prompted Khalid Bin Waleed (who had not embraced Islam by that time) to return and attack from the hillock that Muslim archers had left. This surprise attack changed the situation. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) got wounded because of this attack. Almost 70 Muslims were martyred in this battle. Had the Muslim archers followed the instructions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in letter and spirit, Muslims would have been victorious in this battle too. However, many scholars, such as William Montgomery Watt, are of the view that as the disbelievers of Makkah could

not achieve their goal of rooting out the Muslims completely, they cannot be regarded as victorious.

### The Battle of Trench

Also known as Ghazwa al-Ahzab and the Battle of Khandaq, this battle took place in 627 AD (5 AH). The Muslim army, comprising 3000 soldiers, faced the army of 10,000 disbelievers led by Abu Sufyan. This battle lasted for around two weeks.

### Prophet's (PBUH) strategy

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) adopted a well-thought-out strategy of digging a trench on the northern side of the city of Madina on the suggestion of Hazrat Salman al-Farsi (RA). The rest of Madina was surrounded by mountains and dense trees.

#### a. Taking the strategic position

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) took a strategic position, which gave the Muslims an edge if the enemy crossed the trench. Several attempts were made by the infidels' army to cross the trench, but in vain.

#### b. Handling the threat posed by Banu Qurayza

Banu Qurayza, who were in a pact with the Holy Prophet (PBUH), were persuaded by Huyayy ibn Akhtab - leader of the exiled tribe Banu Nadir - to attack the Muslims from the southern side. This was a grave threat posed by Banu Qurayza to Madina and the Muslims.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) handled this threat by asking Nuaym ibn Masud (RA) to create discord among Banu Qurayza and Abu Sufyan. Nuaym had secretly embraced Islam by then, but was apparently with the disbelievers. Nuaym (RA) did this skilfully and the alliance between Banu Qurayza and Abu Sufyan did not work.

#### c. Divine help

After two or three weeks, the weather deteriorated and violent winds tore the enemy camps and extinguished the fires, terrifying the confederate army which withdrew at the nighttime whereas the Muslims were sheltered against these winds because of their strategic position.

### Withdrawal from war as a military strategy: the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah (628 AD)

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) agreed to sign this treaty despite its apparently-unfavourable provisions for Muslims. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) did not opt for the battle and instead adopted a truce under this treaty. Through this treaty, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) gained time to gather resources to emerge as a great power in the world. Furthermore, the status of the Muslims as an equal bargaining party was established. A military strategist should always be visionary and possess political and diplomatic

acumen.

### Military strategy in the Battle of Khyber

This armed confrontation between the Muslim army and the Jews of Khyber took place in March–April 628 AD. The Muslim army, under the command of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), conquered Khyber. It was in this war that Hazrat Ali (RA) killed Marhab bin al-Harith - the Knight of Khyber.

#### a. Preventive strategy

Here, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) adopted a preventive strategy and attacked the Jews of Khyber before they attacked Muslims.

#### b. Element of surprise

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) swiftly moved the Muslim army and caught the city of Khyber by surprise.

#### c. Strengthening the Muslim army instead of destroying the enemy

The Jews were not massacred; rather, they were allowed to live peacefully in Khyber after paying Jizya. The Muslim army gained a lot of booty from this victory.

### The Battle of Mutah

This battle took place in September 629 AD between the Muslims and the Byzantine Empire and their Ghassanid vassals in the village of Mutah near the Jordan River. Around 3000 Muslims fought against a much bigger army. The strength of the enemy army is disputed; however, it varies from 100,000 to 200,000, according to different sources. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) did not personally participate in this battle.

### Lessons for military strategists in the Battle of Mutah

#### a. Challenging a superpower

It was a very courageous move to mobilize the forces against the superpower of that time - the Byzantine Empire - that had defeated the Persian Empire. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) decided to wage war against this superpower because the Ghassanids had murdered the emissary of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

#### b. Change of commanders

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) appointed Hazrat Zaid ibn Haritha (RA) as the commander of the Muslim army and instructed that if he is martyred, the next com-



mander would be Jafar ibn Abi Talib (RA), and if he, too, gets martyred, Abd Allah ibn Rawahah (RA) would command the army.

#### c. Strategic retreat

When all three commanders got martyred one by one, Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed (RA) took command of the army and retreated in such a manner that the enemy thought it was a trap by the Muslim army, and thus prevented further losses.

#### Lessons for military strategists in the Conquest of Makkah

##### a. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) always fought for a great cause

Makkah was conquered by the Muslims under the command of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) in December 629 AD or January 630 AD (8AH) as the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah was violated by Banu Bakr, an ally of Quaysh who showed aggression against Banu Khazaah who were an ally of the Muslims. Hostilities erupted between two tribes and Nawfal, the leader of Banu Bakr, killed 20 men of Banu Khazaah who had taken refuge in Kaaba.

##### b. Winning hearts and minds

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) headed for Makkah along with 10,000 soldiers. On the way to Makkah, Abu Sufyan came to see Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) and embraced Islam. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) declared Abu Sufyan's house as 'Dar-ul-Aman' for anyone who takes refuge there.

##### c. Humility and gratitude to Allah Almighty

When the Holy Prophet (PBUH) entered Makkah victoriously, he (PBUH) showed utmost humility, modesty and gratefulness to Allah Almighty.

##### d. Putting fear and awe in the hearts of enemy

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) ordered his army to light 10,000 fires and march towards Makkah. The Muslim army entered the city of Makkah from all four corners. This strategy aroused fear and awe in the hearts of the enemy. The Makkans surrendered without any bloodshed.

##### e. Minimal bloodshed and the policy of forgiveness

The Muslim army entered Makkah with the direction from the Holy Prophet (PBUH) that no one be killed except in self-defence. Only a few aggressive and criminal men were killed, and a large-scale bloodshed was averted. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) inflicted no revenge and forgave all.

#### The military strategy of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the Battle of Hunain

This Ghazwa was fought between the Muslims and Banu Hawazin who had allied with Banu Thaqif in 630 AD (8 AH) in the Hunain valley, which is located between Makkah and Taif. This Ghazwa, the last battle

of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) against Arabs, was fought a few days after the Conquest of Makkah. Muslim army comprised 12,000 soldiers.

##### a. Counteracting the ambush with courage

The Muslim army was ambushed in the valley of Hunain by the opposing army, and consequently, it started retreating. Only the Holy Prophet (PBUH), along with his few companions, did not step back and fought bravely. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) loudly called his army to return to the battle, saying, "I am Allah's messenger. I am Muhammad (PBUH), the son of Abdullah." (*Narrated by ibn Kathir in his book "The Battles of Prophet (PBUH)"*)

After that, the Muslim army started regrouping around the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and fought back.

##### b. Divine help

Meanwhile, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) picked up some pebbles in his hand and threw them towards the enemy. With Allah Almighty's help, the eyes of the enemy soldiers were hurt by these pebbles and they started retreating. Finally, the Muslim army got victory and captured around 24,000 camels. Muslim army also captured 6,000 prisoners in this battle.

#### The Battle of Tabuk

This expedition took place in October 630 (9AH). Muslim forces comprised 30,000 soldiers under the command of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to fight against the Byzantine Empire. It was the Prophet's (PBUH) last and largest military expedition. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) stayed for 20 days at Tabuk, waiting for the Byzantine army, which never came. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) thus returned without fighting.

Military strategy in the Battle of Tabuk revolved around the show of force. Heraclius did not come against the Holy Prophet (PBUH) because, in his heart, he was convinced that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was the last Prophet (PBUH) of Allah Almighty and he could not win against him (PBUH).

#### Conclusion

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his companions (RA) fought and won wars against armies that were numerically and logically much superior to the Muslim army. This was possible due to the divine help, effective military strategies of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and courage and dedication of his companions (RA). The Holy Prophet (PBUH) can, thus, rightly be termed the role model for all the military strategists in the world. □

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The global order has experienced notable shifts in the past century, especially after the Cold War, when the world became unipolar. However, this unipolar world could not last long owing to the emergence of new centers of power like Russia and China. Until recently, multilateralism formed the backbone of the post-war, rule-based international order. However, multipolarity presented significant obstacles to collaboration and multilateral organizations, e.g. the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Bretton Woods financial institutions (the IMF and the World Bank), have struggled to effectively address regional and global challenges. One response to deal with the situation has been the growing popularity of "minilateralism," an international relations concept that involves small groups of nations collaborating to tackle problems or



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# MINILATERALISM

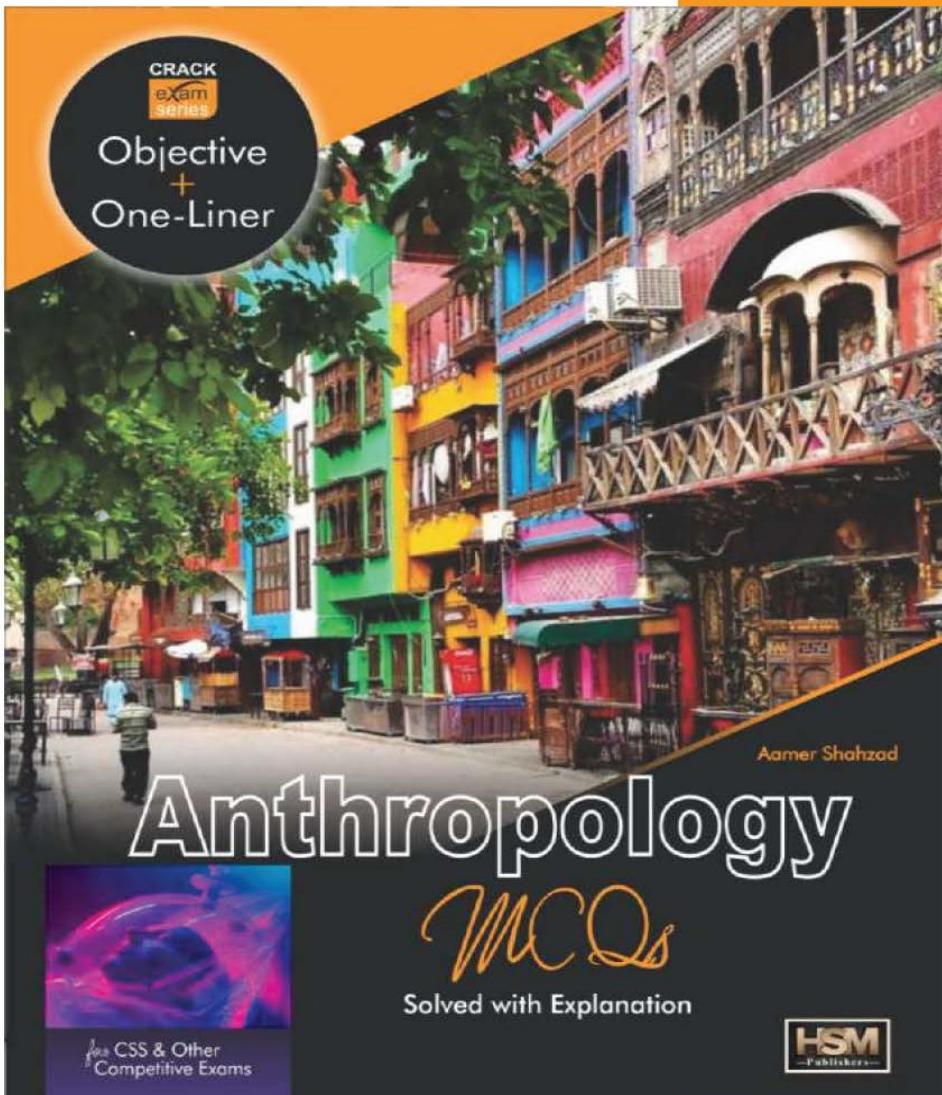
## The Middle Powers' Moment

During much of the 20th century, the world was largely shaped by a bipolar international system, in which the superpowers held sway over most of the world's political and economic resources. Then, in the early 1990s, the world shifted towards a unipolar system, with the United States assuming the role of the sole global leader. Later, the unstoppable rise of China and other countries poised to play a role on the international stage gave rise to multipolarity. But that era is now over, as middle powers are increasingly taking up the role of active agents in shaping the international order. Owing to this transformational change, we're witnessing another shift in traditional international relations with the rise of minilateralism. In an increasingly multipolar world in which traditional institutions struggle to deal with new and complex challenges, the emergence of minilateralism presents a more innovative and flexible approach to diplomacy and international collaboration.

pursue mutual goals. Dissatisfaction with the existing institutional framework, coupled with the intensifying superpower competition between China and the United States, has brought about a worldwide rise in new minilateral agreements. The approach has gained traction for its efficiency and practicality in addressing specific issues, often involving trilateral and quadrilateral partnerships and thriving on informality and task-oriented problem-solving. Recent manifestations of minilateralism have demonstrated its relevance and impact in a world where complex issues require swift and focused solutions.

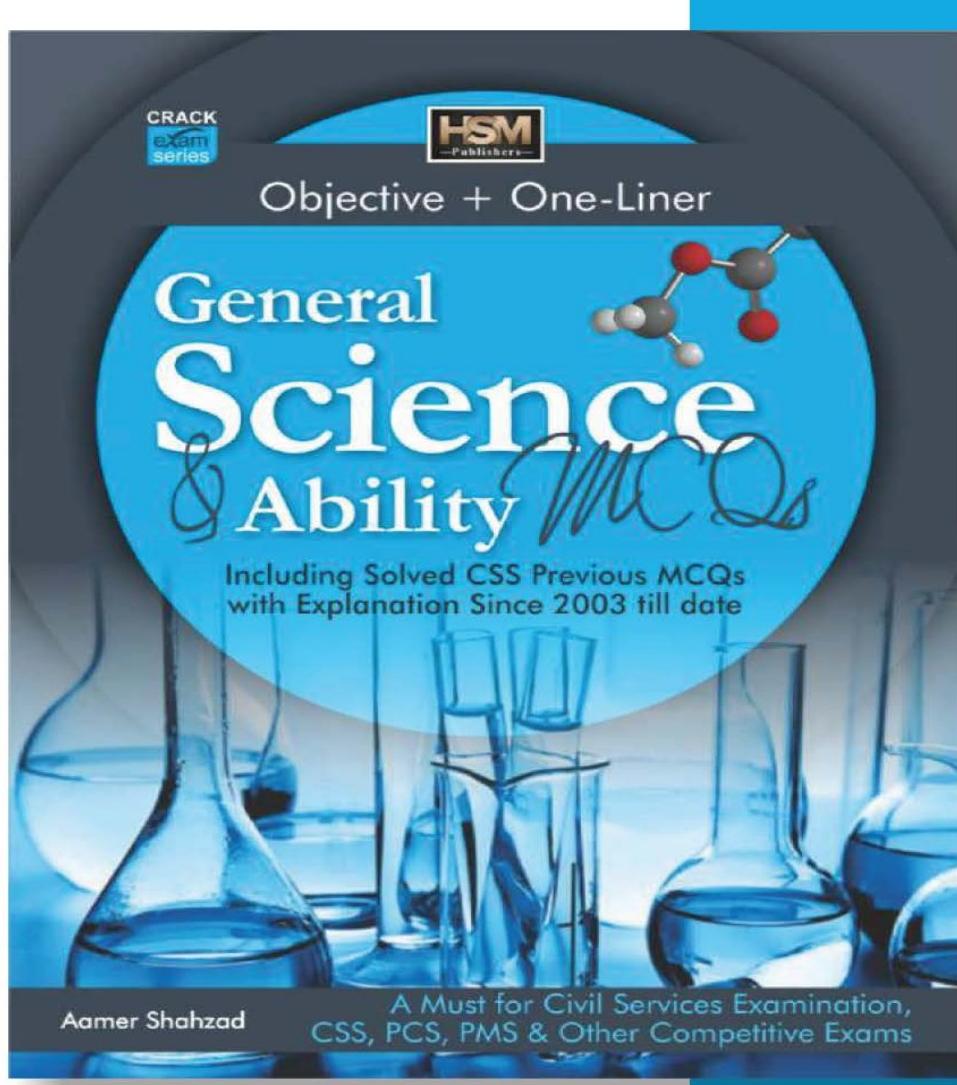
### What is minilateralism?

Minilateralism refers to a diplomatic approach that involves a limited number of countries or parties that work together to address specific issues or achieve common goals. This concept contrasts with multilateralism, which involves broader international cooperation among many countries, often through global institutions like the United Nations. Minilateralism is characterized by smaller, more focused groups that can act more swiftly and



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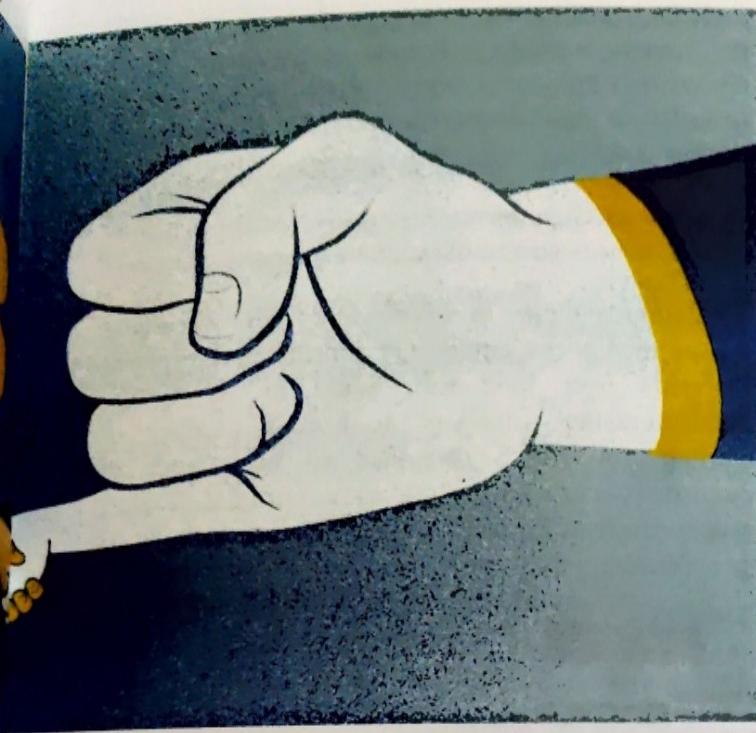
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decisively.

Minilateralism is not a new concept. From the Concert of Europe in the early 19th century to the Quad (Australia, India, Japan and the US) today, minilateralism has been around for years. However, its prominence has increased at a time when major global powers are grappling with significant conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine and the growing divide between the US and China.

#### **Why the rise?**

Today's world faces many issues that transcend countries' borders and require broader international cooperation. At the same time, the global COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing urgency to combat climate change and the protracted war of Russia on Ukraine, all act as a reminder of existing inadequacies in the current multilateral institutions. Furthermore, the growing divide between the US and China, particularly the burgeoning technology war between the two countries, has prompted governments in the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East and elsewhere to seek ways to avoid overdependence on a single actor and prioritize their domestic interests and sovereignty. The number of global problems that world leaders need to address is expanding and diversifying. Many pundits, therefore, argue that we are entering a new era of international politics in which there is a growing need for an alternative to the traditional systems of international cooperation. And minilateralism carries the potential to open new doors for more effective and swift decision-making.

#### **Benefits**

Here are some key aspects and benefits of minilateralism:

##### **a. Flexibility and efficiency**

Minilateral formats are nimbler and more flexible than traditional diplomacy, allowing countries to react faster to crises or opportunities without being bogged down by bureaucracy. This flexibility also allows governments to build stronger, more intimate relationships based on shared interests, rather than being forced to work within the framework of a larger, less cohesive group.

##### **b. Shared interests**

Minilateralism's notable characteristic is an emphasis on shared interests instead of shared values or ideological alignment. As a result, nations can collaborate on critical issues without having to agree on everything or hold the same worldview.

##### **c. Focused collaboration**

By involving a limited number of stakeholders, minilateralism allows for more concentrated efforts on specific issues. This can lead to more effective problem-solving and the ability to tailor strategies to the needs and capabilities of the involved parties.

##### **d. Easier consensus building**

With fewer participants, it is generally easier to reach consensus and align interests. This can lead to stronger commitments and more cohesive action plans.

##### **e. Complementing multilateralism**

Minilateralism can complement broader multilateral efforts by addressing issues that are too specific or urgent for larger organizations to handle effectively. It can also serve as a testing ground for initiatives that can later be expanded to a larger group.

##### **f. Regional solutions**

Minilateralism is often used for regional cooperation, where neighbouring countries or those with shared interests collaborate to address common challenges, such as security, trade or environmental issues.

As middle powers increasingly shape international affairs, the appeal of minilateralism is becoming the preferred approach for many countries.

#### **Some examples**

##### **a. Quad**

Australia, India, Japan and the United States have gradually moved forward on their shared interests following a 2007 initiative by the late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. It aims to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region and addresses issues such as maritime security, counterterrorism and disaster relief.

##### **b. ISA**

Headquartered in India, the International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a coalition of 121 countries, primarily in the developing world, with a shared objective of promoting solar energy and combating climate change. The ISA illustrates how diverse nations can work together to achieve a common goal, irrespective of their ideological or religious differences.

#### c. G7

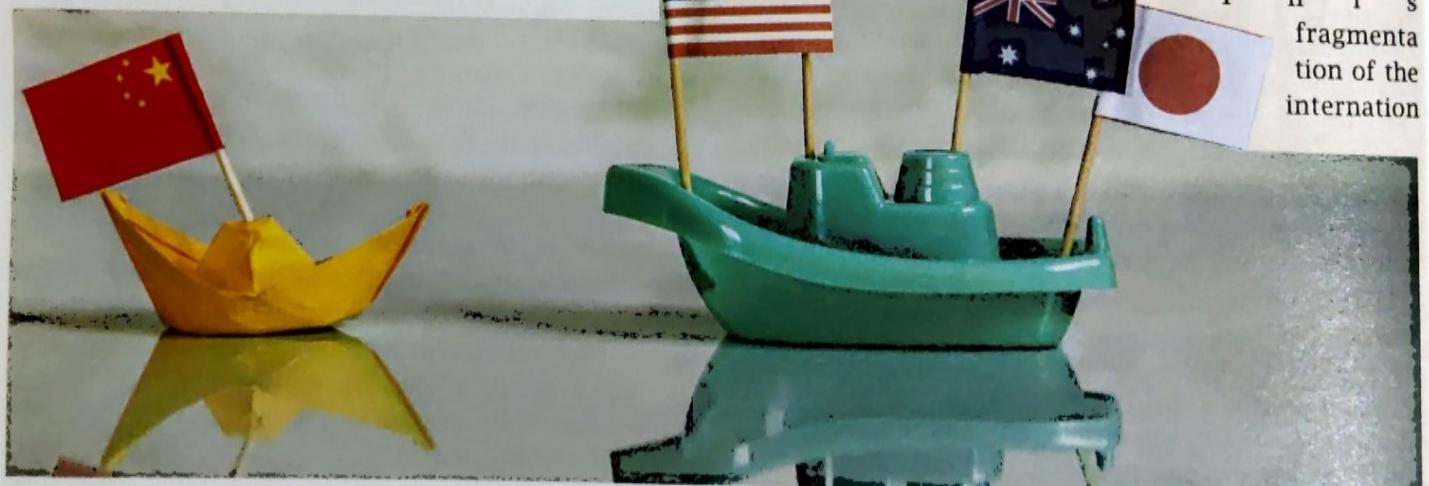
The Group of Seven (G7) consists of seven advanced economies (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States). The G7 addresses global economic issues, international security and policy coordination among its members.

#### d. ASEAN Plus Three

This framework involves the ten ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) members plus China, Japan and South Korea. It focuses on regional economic integration, trade and political cooperation in East Asia.

#### e. AUKUS

This 3-country cluster of Australia, the UK and US, AUKUS is an extension of their alliance,



announced in September 2021, focused on the Indo-Pacific region. A joint submarine program is an immediate aim. China is the unstated adversary.

#### f. Squad

Recently, US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin announced a quadrilateral group called the "Squad," which includes the United States, Australia, Japan, and the Philippines. The first meeting of Squad defence chiefs took place in June 2023 in Singapore. Additionally, in April 2024, the four nations carried out cooperative marine patrols inside the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines - a significant development in the light of ongoing hostilities between China and the Philippines.

#### g. Pacific Alliance

Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru created a full regional group in 2011, based on congruent policies,

including a strong orientation towards Asia. Their goal is to pursue a strategic agenda, including free trade among the four states. Several other states now want to join; it outshines many regional groups in performance.

#### Challenges

However, minilateralism is not a silver bullet as it does have drawbacks. Some of those are enumerated below:

##### a. Exclusivity

Minilateralism may be exclusionary and exacerbate power imbalances, potentially prioritising short-term interests over long-term goals. By its nature, minilateralism involves a limited number of participants, which can lead to perceptions of exclusivity and may exclude important stakeholders whose interests are affected by the decisions made. Its proliferation may also lead to a multitude of conflicting agreements, with different nations forming alliances based on narrow interests rather than shared values.

This fragmentation of the international



order could make it even more challenging to address global challenges that require a coordinated global response, such as climate change, food security and nuclear proliferation.

##### b. Legitimacy

Smaller groups may lack the broader legitimacy and representation of larger multilateral organizations. This can affect the acceptance and implementation of their decisions by the wider international community.

##### c. Coordination with multilateral efforts

Ensuring that minilateral initiatives complement and do not undermine broader multilateral efforts can be challenging. Effective coordination is necessary to avoid duplication of efforts and conflicting agendas.

##### Options for Pakistan

Pakistan's foreign policy choices do not remain detached from the multiplex world order. So far,

Pakistan assumes itself to be a relevant and important player in international politics, probably due to its geostrategic location, but on the international stage, it is, realistically speaking, a periphery state with limited options and a shrinking diplomatic space even with its close allies.

Each passing day is a regression for Pakistan's foreign policy options, not because of the international political environment but because of internal political instability and the degrading national economy. Islamabad must take cognizance of the changing global order and take measures to adapt to it.

Pakistan's foreign policy has been focused on forging long-lasting friendships that could not materialize as presumed. At the same time, it is driven by a security orientation and dependence on major powers. While security orientation is understandable due to a hostile South Asia, this has made Pakistan highly dependent on the support of the Global North.

Pakistan has made tremendous sacrifices due to such an orientation. In order to move away from a security-oriented towards an economy-driven foreign policy, Pakistan proposed a pivot to geo-economics which was a renewed security orientation from geostrategic to geo-economics. There is still a debate in the policy circles of Pakistan on whether geo-economics is more important than geostrategic or vice versa or both go hand in hand.

Regardless of the answer, geo-economics is being dictated by the security setups rather than the civilian government, probably due to the weaker and disorientated approaches of the latter. This shows that national economic progress is viewed through the lens of security. However, a security-oriented foreign policy will continue to have limited roles and options in a multiplex world order that is eagerly looking for sustainable and result-oriented mutual interests. It is even feared that such an approach might isolate Pakistan.

To enhance Pakistan's options in a multiplex world order, experts believe that establishing political and economic stability should be the utmost priority of Pakistan. Political

and economic stability in Pakistan would incentivize states to count it in on minilateral and multilateral forums. Due to a tilt towards a security-oriented foreign policy, Pakistan could not even incentivize CPEC as it hoped.

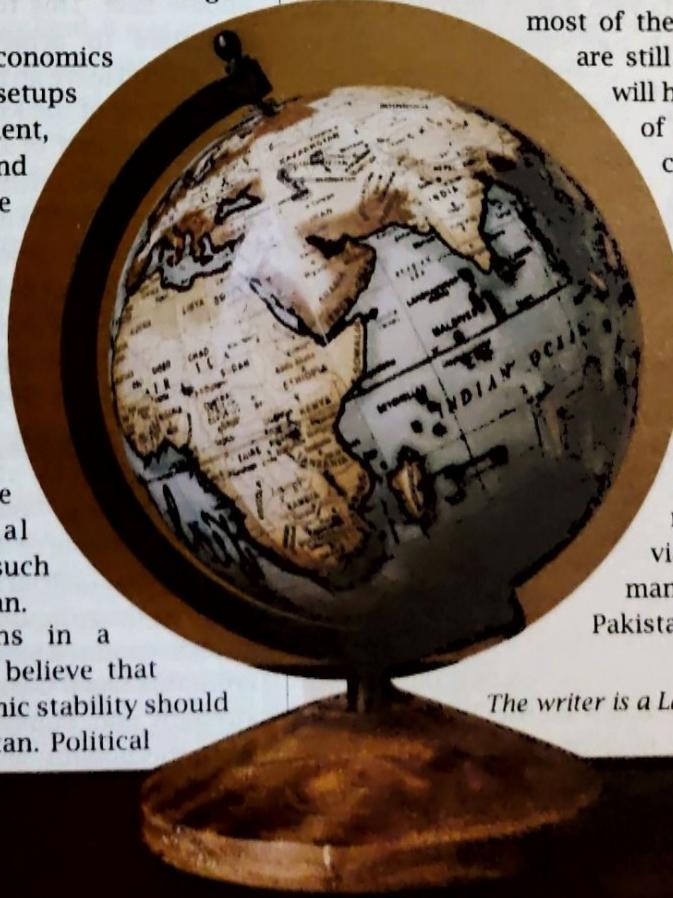
The changing world order demands that Pakistan also forge economic ties based on a barter trade system with the Global South, which is no longer the underdeveloped Third World. Though a balanced approach towards major powers such as the US and China is ideal, even maintaining cordial relations with these states is paramount under present circumstances.

Pakistan needs to move fast and beyond the binary terms of 'this or that' rather focus on this 'and that' such as the US and China, GCC and Africa, and so on. This would diversify options and maximize opportunities as well as returns, which is how states are navigating in the emerging multiplex world order.

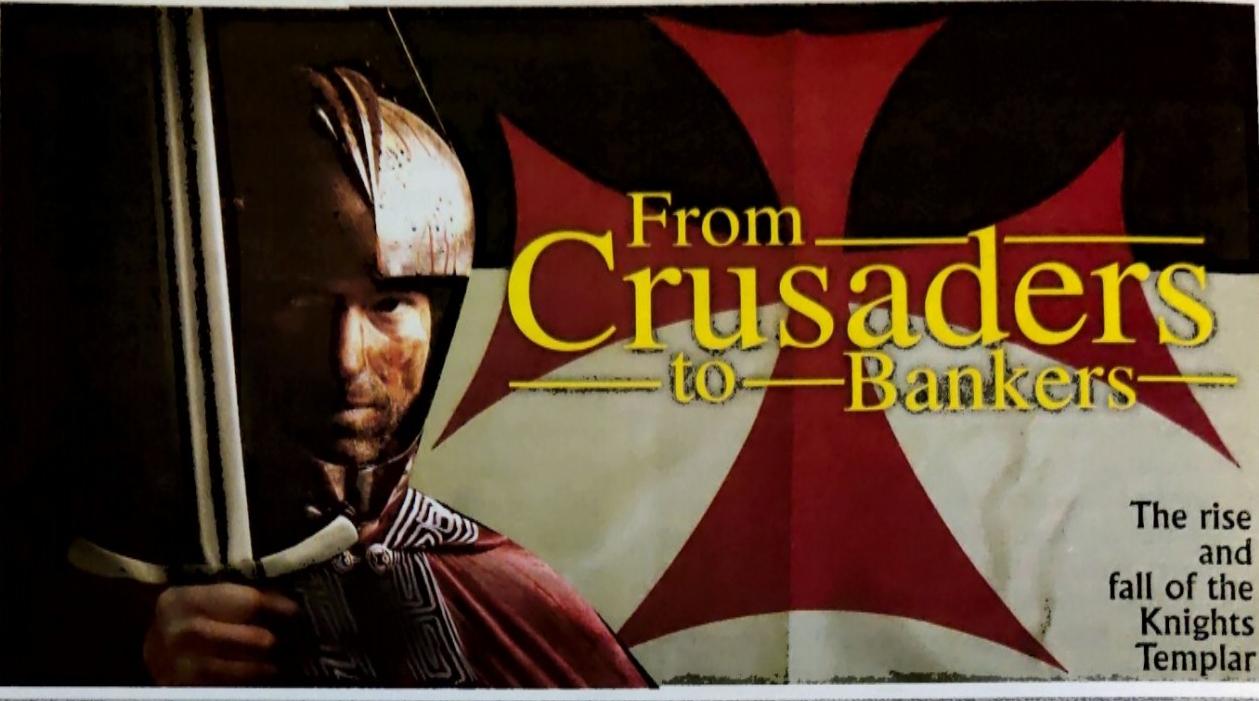
### Conclusion

Minilateralism brings a breath of fresh air to the current state of international collaboration. Potential drawbacks notwithstanding, it is, and will remain, a constructive tool for cooperation among nations. With its relative simplicity and straightforwardness, it has the potential to enhance inter-state relations and

create innovative solutions. However, most of the minilateral groupings are still in their nascent stage and will have to overcome a host of challenges before they can be labelled a success. Put simply, the benefits of minilateralism outweigh the costs. The rise of middle powers and rapid technological advancements make it clear that minilateralism is a viable way forward for many countries, including Pakistan. □



*The writer is a Lahore-based academician and political analyst.*



# From Crusaders to Bankers

The rise and fall of the Knights Templar



The Middle Ages provide history enthusiasts with a story that can hardly be rivalled: the story of the Knights Templar - wealthy, powerful and mysterious order which, with their financial and banking acumen and military prowess, worked on behalf of Christianity. The Knights Templar was founded in the early twelfth century and throughout the crusades, they grew into a powerful and mysterious order of knights in Europe. Known for their bravery and valiance in the battlefield, they worked also in the realms of commerce, religion and diplomacy. In the way they managed money and in the banking systems they developed, they laid the foundations of modern financial practices.

The origin of the Knights Templar is closely linked to the Crusades, a series of military campaigns that the Christians of Europe undertook with the mission of recapturing the Holy Land from the Muslims. During these years, several knights formed a brotherhood of fighters whose main role was to protect the pilgrims to Jerusalem. These new knights of the Templar soon gained a reputation for their bravery and loyalty to their cause. Because of the challenges that the pilgrims faced, the Templars employed their wealth and power to aid them in the movement of money and trade for

the financial support of the crusades in Europe and the Middle East. This force and finance empowered the Templars to achieve unchallengeable power and money and leave an indelible mark on history.

The history of the Knights Templar can be traced back to the first half of the twelfth century, following the capture of Jerusalem by Christian armies in 1099. The order was founded in 1119 by a French knight, Hugues de Payens, along with eight relatives and acquaintances, calling it the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon — later known simply as the Knights Templar. They presented their services to Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem, and requested that he establish a monastic military order to guard pilgrims. Realizing their strategic significance, Baldwin bestowed upon them headquarters in the Temple Mount, the source of their now-iconic name. They were given quarters next to the temple and they adopted their distinctive uniform - white tunics with an eight-pointed blood-red cross.

From this small beginning, the Templars expanded in strength and number, receiving funds and recruits from the nobility and from common people all over Europe. Since they were entrusted with the role of protecting pilgrims and being the defenders of Christianity, they were able to attain immense military

Amna Hashmi

## EXAM PACK

and religious authority, sanctioned by the church and the European nobility.

Their initial aim was to protect Christian travellers and to engage in battles in the holy land, but the Knights Templar evolved into the first financiers and banks. They also provided banking to fellow crusaders and travellers to protect their money and wealth, and facilitate the transfer of capital. They assisted in the creation of safe, long-distance trade through the use of letters of credit, which played a crucial role in enhancing the economy and trade in mediaeval Europe. The Templars, being an organization of knights that operated on the principles of philanthropy, had little to do with the loans they provided; instead, they promoted cultural and economic interaction in the Middle Ages.

They also had specific measures for handling cash and other measures of accounting, which were the fundamentals of modern banking security.

The Order of the Knights Templar became extremely wealthy and powerful, as they were granted the responsibility of protecting the holy land. It was able to maintain the image of an honest, reliable and financially prudent organization, which helped them attract more funds and donations from Christians. However, it is noteworthy that they climbed to the top by forming partnerships with monarchs, nobles and the church, for they were able to be free from duties and tariffs and get profitable estates. The Templars also constructed castles and treasures across Europe to consolidate their order and strengthen their authority. These commanderies were the places where adminis-

tration, finance and warfare were managed, and they also acted as a link between the East and the West. However, the growth of the Knights Templar was going, surely, to attract resistance of other religious orders and kings. Manoeuvrings and scandals, as well as claims of heresy, blasphemy and corruption, only amplified the doubts and undermined their legitimacy. In the early 14th century, King Philip IV of France and Pope Clement V schemed against the Templars, and the reasons were the king's indebtedness to the order and political instability. A papal bull labelled the order as heretics, and consequently, the members were arrested, their properties confiscated, and the order disbanded. This is why most of the Templars, who were arrested, had to plead guilty to the charges brought against them during the trials.

The Knights Templar's downfall is an epitome of what may be expected: whenever power corrupts, plotting and politics are involved. They introduced various changes in the fields of banking and finance; for instance, investment management, secure deposits and letters of credit. Some of the current-day financial institutions, e.g. Grameen Bank and Triodos Bank, have embraced the virtues of the Templars, including trust, ethical behaviour and conscientious stewardship. However, their impact on the financial systems of the world is still felt, and this makes it clear that the world requires ethical behaviour and continued keen observation on the management of the financial systems.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the Knights Templar are rather ambiguous when it comes to history, beginning with their role as a military and religious order and ending with their role as financial pioneers. These dynasties' influence on banking and finance can be still felt today, and as such, it is evident that they are still applicable to the contemporary world. Yet, despite the fact that they were defeated in a moment of time, they continued to inspire people, demonstrating that they were clever, courageous and ingenious. ■

### The Knights Templar Today

While most historians agree that the Knights Templar – full name "Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon" – fully disbanded 700 years ago, there are some people who believe the order went underground and remains in existence in some form to this day. In the 18th century, some groups, most notably the Freemasons, revived several of the medieval knights' symbols, rituals and traditions. Currently, there are several international organizations styled after the Knights Templar that the public can join. These groups have representatives around the world and aim to uphold the values and traditions of the original medieval order.



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Religion and politics have had a complex interaction throughout the known history of the world. But in the early 21st century, the rise of violent extremist ideologies disrupted the very fabric of society and undermined the foundational principles of the Westphalian order - welfarism, secularism, plurality, inclusivity and democracy. The separation of church and state - a political concept where the government does not declare an official national religion and does not interfere with how or when you can practice your faith - was one of the cardinal principles of the nation-state system. One can argue that secularism grew out of one of the tenets of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648): "whose region, his religion."

Two nation-states, namely India and Pakistan, emerged in 1947 after the withdrawal of Great Britain from India. The struggle against the British colonial government took different forms, and religion did play an important role in it. Gandhi used religious symbols to attract people to the struggle for independence, and the All-India Muslim League employed religion to enlist the support of the Muslims for a separate state.

The Muslims' demand for a separate homeland materialized when the British finally left the subcontinent. As Muslims used Islam as a rallying point in the struggle against the British and Hindus, its role in the newly-founded state of Pakistan became an issue of intense tussle between the modernists and the conservatives. It is also a known fact that the founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, never aspired for Pakistan to be a theocracy. His various addresses indicate that he envisioned Pakistan as a democratic state wherein Muslims of the Subcontinent would have the freedom to shape their lives in accordance with Islamic social and cultural values as they interpreted them. It is evident that the Quaid understood very well that a democratic state cannot simultaneously be an ideological state, as the latter entails elements of compulsion that contradict democratic principles. It was evident from the public statements of the founding father of Pakistan that while Islam held importance, its role in the polity was

# ANALYZING THE ROLE OF **POLITICS AND RELIGION** in Violent Extremism in Pakistan



limited.

In the post-partition period, there was no blueprint prepared for effectively governing the new country. What happened in the initial formative years was contrary to what was envisioned by the Quaid. There was no clear explanation about the structure of the state and the role of Islam in the new state; thus, the power-wielders used it for political purposes. Ayesha Jalal has rightly pointed out that the originally intended outcome and the confused ideological character of the new state clearly reflect the inchoate interests that coalesced around its formation.

Thazha Varkey Paul has argued in his book 'The Warrior State: Pakistan in the Contemporary World' that the lack of clarity about the role of religion in Pakistan feeds identity-based politics, making it difficult to create a consensus about the need for a shared investment in the public good across all social groups. Moreover, the seeds of religious extremism and intolerance sown by General Zia Ul Haq under his project of Islamization and puritanical interpretation of Islam promoted a conservative, harsh and fundamentalist brand of Islam in Pakistan. Religious extremism, once injected into the bloodstream of a nation, rarely leaves the body politic, as is the case in Pakistan after the death of Zia.

## EXAM PACK

We, the Pakistanis, have a mob mentality that drives aggression and leads to destruction and chaos. It is a bitter truth that the state and society have not given the rights and respect to the minorities that they deserve. In many cases, those who commit violence against minorities are exonerated for fear of backlash; their places of worship are targeted and incidents targeting them for desecrating the Holy Quran and the personality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) have become more of a norm than an exception. In fact, minorities are considered second-class citizens, but it greatly undermines the pluralistic fabric of society. This clearly demonstrates an extremist mindset.

The National Counter-Extremism Guidelines, issued by the government in 2018, starts with the very concept of extremism. The document says that extremism is broadly identified as having an absolute belief in one's truth with an ingrained sense of self-righteousness [which] enables the holder of belief to grow a judgmental attitude towards other people's beliefs, followed by intolerance." According to the national document, Pakistan recognizes that "extremism is manifested in forms including sectarianism, religious persecution, distortion of religious injunctions, hate-speech and literature, a sense of deprivation amongst provinces, left and right-wing political ideologies, smuggling, addictions, border control, and archaic traditions".

The Pakistani state itself has become a victim of religiosity and has entrenched religious extremism in every aspect and cadre of society. This has permeated an extremist mentality among the nation, leading to a mindset that opposes the rights of minorities, their religions, cultures and traditions, considering such opposition a part of religious ideology. A trend of Muslims' intolerance towards minorities has been escalating since August 2023, when more than 20

churches and nearly 100 homes were attacked. While incidents of blasphemy allegations are not new in Pakistan, it has become a trend to lynch and kill even before unearthing evidence regarding whether the accused person is guilty or not. Notable incidents include the lynching and burning of Sri Lankan citizen Priyantha Kumara, who was working as a factory manager in Sialkot, by a violent mob; the 2017 lynching of Mashal Khan, an undergraduate student at Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, by university students who accused him of blasphemy; and the August 16 rampage and burning of churches and homes in Jaranwala, Faisalabad district. Similarly, a few days ago, a mob brutally attacked and beat Nazir Masih, a 72-year-old Christian man, setting on fire his home and business in Mujahid Colony, Sargodha. Such incidents are reminiscent of the government's failure to de-radicalize extremists and undermine interfaith harmony.

It is indispensable for the incumbent government to formulate effective policies that address the root causes of extremism and intolerance and consider minorities equal citizens of Pakistan, leaving no room in the constitution for religiosity and violence in the name of religion. First and foremost, state institutions and other corresponding stakeholders should ensure the enforcement of Article 20 of the Constitution - 'Freedom to Profess Religion and Manage Religious Institutions'. Secondly, they should promote inter-faith harmony and a healthy understanding with minorities, guaranteeing their safety and peace of mind across the country. Thirdly, there must be reforms in the educational curriculum to prevent or counter extremism by fostering respect for differences and encouraging open, critical thinking that questions preconceived ideas. It is not education in general, but critical thinking, critical consciousness, and reflexivity that prevent or counter extremism. Fourthly, the government should prioritize registering religious seminaries and absolutely stop the use of Islam for political gains, avoiding the manipulation of religious sentiments through rhetoric and political engineering. In a nutshell, the government should align itself with the principles of democracy, inter-faith harmony and inclusivity, which can propel society towards progress, peace and prosperity. □

**When religion becomes politicized, or politics becomes religionised, bad things happen, and we must avoid that if we can. Politics speaks to our conflicting interests. Religion should speak to our shared responsibilities.**

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## EXAM PACK

The possibility of space wars, often depicted in science fiction, has become a topic of serious discussion among policymakers, military strategists and international relations experts. The once-fictional notion of using space weapons to incapacitate satellites with powerful energy waves is now a tangible reality. There is a noticeable trend wherein an increasing number of countries are harnessing space to bolster their military capabilities and safeguard national security. As space becomes increasingly important for military, commercial and scientific purposes, the potential for conflict in this domain grows. Amidst these developments, the possibility of space wars is a growing concern. In the following piece, the writer has explored various aspects of coming space wars and suggested ways to prevent them from happening.

Usman Ali Awan

**N**ations have long fought on Earth, but now the attention is shifting to space, where a similar trend threatens the sanctity of this vast expanse. [The Artemis Accords – spearheaded by the United States, alongside the European Union's Strategic Compass, NATO's Allied Air Command and

destroy enemy spacecraft. This stance stands in stark contrast to the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, which regarded space as a region of peace and collaboration. The Treaty, which establishes space as a domain open to all for exploration and prevents national claims to sovereignty there, exemplifies space as a region of



Space Centre of Excellence; the deployment of Space X satellite constellations; the operational prowess of the Soyuz launcher and the Galileo spacecraft; the establishment of sovereign Space Forces and geospatial intelligence capabilities such as Airbus Defense and Space; and the dynamic evolution of the "New Space" economy collectively portend humanity's burgeoning endeavours beyond the confines of Earth's atmosphere.]

The Pentagon's latest actions underscore this trend. With powers like China and Russia making tremendous advances in space-based operations, the United States is responding by creating extensive capabilities for potential space warfare. This entails deploying a new generation of ground- and space-based technologies to protect American satellites and, if necessary,

peace and cooperation. However, growing weapons race in orbit stands in striking contrast to this objective. The deployment of anti-satellite missiles, the testing of destructive technologies and the possibility of conflicts spilling into space, all threaten to turn space into a war-fighting domain, replicating the world's most conflict-ridden conditions.

As celestial stewards, nations must understand the unique and uniting aspect of space. It should be a place for peaceful exploration and a symbol of human cooperation, not a place for battle. Haven't we learned anything from our past actions? The sanctity of space must be preserved through international accords that demand demilitarization and ensure that space remains a neutral zone for scientific growth and exploration.

The term "Mother Earth" represents the entire universe as a caring, life-giving force that is central to many cultures and mythologies around the world. This concept, represented by characters such as Gaia from Greek mythology and Pachamama in Incan beliefs, depicts the planet as a maternal figure that nurtures all life. Had humanity constantly treated the Earth with the reverence that this term implies, we might not be facing climate crisis and space debris problems. Space debris is no longer a problem of the future; it has already started falling down. According to recent news, a farmer in rural Saskatchewan, Barry Sawchuk, recently discovered a two-metre wide, 40-kilogram heap of twisted, burnt metal. Sawchuk said the multiple layers of charred composite fibres and webbing made him suspect it was space debris.

The ethos that governs our reverence for Mother Earth should also apply to space: a common treasure that deserves our care and protection. By pushing for a peaceful space environment, we are campaigning for

#### **The Outer Space Treaty of 1967**

The Outer Space Treaty, formally titled the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, came into existence in October 1967.

Signed by 103 countries and ratified by key nations such as the UK, Russia and the US, this treaty aims to regulate and oversee the actions of member states concerning all celestial bodies and the moon.

The Outer Space Treaty assigns international accountability to member states for their activities in outer space, encompassing the moon and other celestial bodies, regardless of whether these endeavors are carried out by governmental bodies or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

They are obligated to ensure that such activities adhere to the treaty's principles, which emphasize peaceful exploration and use of outer space, international cooperation, non-appropriation and non-weaponsization. Additionally, states must authorize and supervise all relevant activities.

The Outer Space Treaty also establishes liability for damage, holding launching states internationally accountable for any harm caused to another State Party, its citizens, or entities on Earth, in the atmosphere, or in outer space, resulting from their space objects or components. There are four more multilateral treaties that deal with specific concepts agreed to in the Outer Space Treaty:

1. The Rescue Agreement of 1968
2. The Space Liability Convention of 1972
3. The Registration Convention of 1976
4. The Moon Treaty of 1979

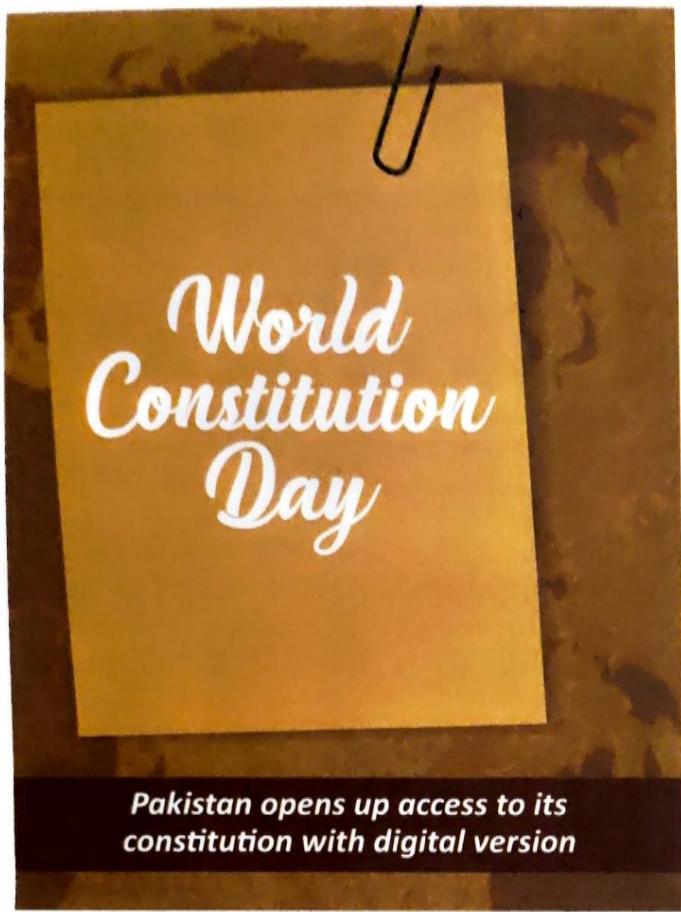
the future - not just of our planet, but also of the coming generations who may, one day, turn to the stars as a sign of what mankind can achieve when it transcends its most basic behaviours. In terms of preserving space, Privateer, is redefining space data consumption through an intriguing model. The company is revolutionizing how satellite data is accessible and used. Their strategy, influenced by models, such as Uber, is to democratize space data, making it as accessible and affordable as other web services. It is streamlining access to space data in a manner similar to how Uber transformed transportation. In this comparison, they see each satellite as a vehicle and each nation as a driver, with the goal of making satellite data as simple and accessible as scheduling a taxi. This method not only makes space data more affordable, but also encourages the sharing of existing resources rather than the creation of new ones, resulting in less space clutter and costs. This democratization of space data may result in a larger, more collaborative use of these resources, safeguarding space as a shared and peaceful domain.

Privateer's Alex Fielding, while highlighting the sustainability and effectiveness of sharing existing space resources rather than developing new ones, said, "One of our bets on the market is that the most sustainable thing you can do is share," adding that if "you have a camera over my house and I want to use it, just share. You don't need to launch a second camera over my house." This strategy demonstrates a dedication to decreasing clutter and expense in space operations, which aligns with the larger goal of preserving space as a sustainable and collaborative domain. Space diplomacy also plays a huge role in moving forward collaboratively.

This vision of space as holy and free of violence highlights the urgent need for global dialogue and solid efforts to prevent space militarization.

Space should inspire collaboration, rather than competition and war. It should bring us together in our shared humanity in the universe. □





A constitution is the rule book for a state. It sets out the fundamental principles by which the state is governed. It describes the main institutions of the state, and defines the relationship between these institutions (e.g., between the executive, legislature and judiciary). It places limits on the exercise of power, and sets out the rights and duties of citizens.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a constitution as "a body of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or organization is governed". The Collins dictionary says a constitution consists of "the fundamental principles on which a state is governed, especially when considered as embodying the rights of subjects".

A constitution sets out how all the elements of government are organized and how power is carved up among different political units. It contains rules about what power is wielded, who wields it and over whom it is wielded in the governing of a country.

And, as a kind of deal or contract between those in power and those who are subjected to this power, a constitution defines the rights and duties of citizens, and the devices that keep those in power in check. So, it is important for the citizens of a country to be aware of its constitution and have easy access to it so as to be better, responsible citizens of the state.

**The Constitution** is the fundamental law of a nation that outlines the powers and limitations of the government, and the rights and duties of citizens. It is the foundation on which the governance structure of a country is erected. It is an essential document that sets the framework for the governance of a country, and serves as a safeguard against tyranny and abuse of power. It reflects a country's social and political character, framing its legal and political systems. It ensures accountability, prevents abuses of power and upholds the rule of law. A constitution safeguards citizens' liberties, maintains order and serves as a cohesive national identity, fostering stability and democracy.

Muhammad Atif

Pakistan, just like most countries of the world, has adopted written constitutions as a foundational legal document that delineates the principles, structures and operations of government, ensuring clarity and predictability in governance. The Constitution of Pakistan establishes the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens, providing a bulwark against arbitrary state power and guaranteeing individual liberties.

What differentiates a constitution from other legal documents is the set of key functions it performs. Firstly, unlike laws that can be easily amended, a constitution is difficult to repeal or change. This ensures that the core principles and rights it enshrines remain relatively stable and permanent, guiding the nation through various political shifts. Imagine a nation like Pakistan weathering a political storm. The constitution, with its inherent stability, acts as an anchor, providing a steady foundation for the country's legal and political systems.

With an aim to highlight the positive benefits of a written constitution, every year on August 1st, the world comes together to celebrate World Constitution Day, a commemoration that aims to raise awareness about the importance of the constitution and drive efforts to promote constitutional literacy. It's a celebration of the passion people have for good governance.

The day focuses on connecting participants with exemplary constitutional practices and fostering educational and community outreach programs. Workshops might explore how different countries have implemented constitutional rights, while outreach programs could encourage young people to become familiar with their national constitution.

For advocates of constitutions and leaders, World Constitution Day provides a platform for civic communities and elected officials to share their passion for good governance. It serves as a bridge between past and future, tradition and innovation, and local and global perspectives. By opening doors (both physically and

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virtually) and incorporating educational elements, the day fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation for constitutions.

This year's World Constitution Day has a special significance for Pakistan as the country recently achieved a significant milestone in making its foundational document more accessible to the public.

As a media professional deeply committed to ensuring public access to information, I have long recognized the importance of clear and accessible communication. This principle is especially crucial when applied to foundational documents like constitutions, which serve as the bedrock of a nation's governance. To illustrate this point, I want to highlight a significant effort - the digitization of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This project exemplifies this commitment by making the country's Constitution more accessible to the public.

The project's driving force was a seasoned media professional, an alumnus of the University of Balochistan currently serving as the Deputy Controller (Programme) at Radio Pakistan. Recognizing the immense potential of technology to revolutionize public engagement with the Constitution, he proposed its digitization and garnered the unwavering support of the University administration. His dedication proved crucial in bringing this vision to life. He meticulously undertook the vital task of formatting and coding the Constitution's text in both Urdu and English, ensuring its smooth integration into the digital platform. He even went beyond by designing a user-friendly layout for all the platform's functionalities. Through this collaborative effort, a comprehensive online platform (<http://cop.uob.edu.pk/cop/>) was created, offering the complete text of the Constitution of Pakistan in a readily accessible format. Moreover, by making the Constitution easily searchable and understandable, the project has empowered citizens to engage more actively with their nation's core governing document. Downloads of the Constitution have surged, demonstrating a growing public interest in understanding the rights and principles enshrined within. This achievement has garnered international recognition, with him being honored as a Global Network Ambassador for World Constitution Day 2024.

The platform boasts several user-friendly features to enhance accessibility. Users can access the complete Constitution in both languages, benefit from extensive

search options (enabling them to locate specific articles quickly and efficiently), and gain valuable context through footnotes and annotations accompanying each article. Additionally, the platform grants easy access to all annexures.

The official launch of this groundbreaking platform took place on November 18, 2023, during the 20th convocation of the University of Balochistan. The inauguration ceremony was graced by the honorable Governor of Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Kakar. The digitization of Pakistan's Constitution is expected to set a precedent for innovation and collaboration, potentially inspiring similar initiatives globally. This initiative underscores the vital role of accessible and understandable constitutions in fostering an informed citizenry and strengthening democratic foundations. It also highlights the University of Balochistan's commitment to advancing educational and democratic values through technological innovation.

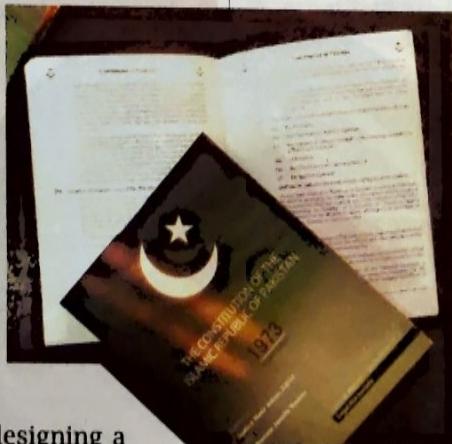
Imagine a ripple effect, where Pakistan's project inspires other nations to digitize their constitutions,

leading to a world where these foundational documents are readily available to all citizens. This increased accessibility empowers people to understand their rights and hold their governments accountable, ultimately strengthening democracies around the globe. World Constitution Day celebrates the virtues and benefits of written constitutions. Both written and unwritten constitutions form the cornerstone of a nation's system. However, written constitutions offer a clear and tangible reference point

for citizens and lawmakers, unlike unwritten ones that rely on traditions and judicial rulings. The clarity and accessibility of a written constitution, like Pakistan's, underscore its importance in modern governance.

The digitization of Pakistan's Constitution is a significant milestone in enhancing public understanding of this critical document. As we celebrate World Constitution Day, let us recognize the vital role of constitutions in shaping the social and political character of nations and in establishing the values and rights that guide our societies. This initiative not only marks a significant achievement for Pakistan but also highlights the importance of technological innovation in promoting constitutional literacy and fostering informed citizenry. ■

*The writer is Global Network Ambassador for World Constitution Day 2024*



# ZERO DEBRIS CHARTER

*An ambitious plan to achieve a state of zero debris*

Recently, solidifying their commitment to the long-term sustainability of human activities in lower Earth orbit, 12 countries and the European Space Agency (ESA) signed the Zero Debris Charter (ZDC) which aims to establish far-reaching guiding principles and ambitious yet feasible technical targets to guide the development of a Zero Debris roadmap.

#### What is space debris?

Space debris, or more colloquially known as space junk, is any human-made object in orbit not serving a useful purpose and typically is a result of space vehicles no longer in service. The objects that fit this classification greatly range in size, from old spacecraft and the rocket stages that launched them to micro-debris like flecks of paint. Much of the debris is in LEO, within 2,000 km (1,200 miles) of Earth's surface, though some debris can be found in geostationary orbit 35,786 km (22,236 miles) above the Equator.

#### Key features of ZDC

It is an initiative of the European Space Agency (ESA) unveiled at the ESA Space Summit in Seville meeting in November 2023. The Charter comes after ESA Member States encouraged the Agency to implement "a Zero Debris approach for its missions and to encourage partners and other actors to pursue similar paths".

It is the first initiative of its kind to bring together the largest array and variety of space actors around the world with the joint goal of creating no more debris by 2030 and making possible the long-term sustainability of space activities.

#### Objectives

The SDC commits signatories to eliminate the creation of new space debris by 2030, i.e. achieving a state of zero debris. It means no new space debris will be created, and efforts will be made to remove existing debris. The Charter sets a target of 99% success rate for post-mission disposal strategies, including the

use of external means, if necessary. It stipulates that the probability of a mission generating space debris should be less than 1 in 1,000 for each object involved. Moreover, it promotes global cooperation among space-faring nations and organizations to collectively address the issue of space debris.

It also aims to combine far-reaching guiding principles and highly ambitious yet realistic technical targets on which to build an ambitious Zero Debris roadmap, driving global space debris mitigation and remediation efforts.

#### 12 signatory countries

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom have all pledged to adhere to the Charter. In addition, more than 100 organizations have already promised to sign the community-led endeavour in the coming months.

#### Legal status

The Charter is a non-legally binding agreement, but it fosters a community of proactive actors working collectively towards jointly defined targets for 2030.

#### Implementation

To implement the Charter, the ESA will focus on developing groundbreaking technologies for satellites' end-of-life disposal, in-orbit servicing, and active debris removal. In addition, ESA will work hand-in-hand with institutions in charge of regulatory aspects.

#### Conclusion

The ZDC is an initiative that puts forward a strong message to cater for the issue of the growing space debris. It recognises that meaningful improvements to space safety and sustainability can only be achieved through the cooperative efforts of a community committed to acting towards jointly defined measurable targets for 2030. □

*The writer is a member of staff.*

M. Usman Butt

**I**nternational organizations (IOs) play a vital role in mediation, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, imposing sanctions, global governance and addressing critical international issues such as global health policy, monetary policies worldwide, climate change, resource depletion and management of global commons. Since they are formed through legal processes and employ law as a means of governance; therefore, they are expected to abide by the principles of the rule of law. International law is integral to the establishment, functioning and regulation of these organizations. IOs are recognized as subjects of international law, with specific rights and obligations. However, their international legal personality is limited, and their rights and obligations are determined by the treaties under which they were created. The following write-up aims to decipher different rights and responsibilities of IOs.

#### What is International Law?

International law is a set of rules, agreements and treaties that are binding between and among countries. Countries come together to make binding rules that they believe will benefit the citizens. It is an independent system of law existing outside the legal framework of a particular state. The existence of international law is the result of increased interstate engagement. It mainly aims to maintain international peace and security among different states. It also helps:

- promote friendly relations among the member states (members of the international community, for example, the United Nations),
- provide for basic humanitarian rights,
- solve international problems through

international cooperation,

- refrain the state from using threat or force over the territory of any other state to provide for the right to self-determination to people, and
- use peaceful methods to settle international disputes are a few of its functions.

#### Types

International Law can be broadly divided into three types:

##### 1. Public International Law

Public international law deals mostly with the rights and responsibilities that countries have toward each other. In international law, countries are usually referred to as "states." It also applies to IOs such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). This type of international law sets the rules for issues that concern all humankind: the environment,

In today's global community, international organizations are playing a significant role and their growing influence is an undeniable fact. It is because these organizations adopt measures which greatly influence or regulate interstate activities in many fields of international cooperation. Their involvement has become a predominant feature of the areas of international relations such as international trade, human rights protection or so-called international regimes. It is crucial to consider that these organizations act as independent actors and they have gradually been entrusted with powers that were long considered the domain of sovereign powers. They are capable of exercising these powers by virtue of their international legal personality. On the same basis, they can incur their own international responsibility, similar to as primary subjects of international law.

## Rights and Duties of International Organizations

the oceans, human rights, international business, etc. Various international bodies enforce these rules. For example, the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and hears cases of people accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity. This court applies "international criminal law."

### **2. Private International Law**

Private international law deals with relationships between citizens of different countries. For example, an American man and a French woman were married in France and now live in Canada. If they want to divorce, the rules of private international law will determine whether they have to go to a French or a Canadian court to get their divorce.

Private international law also applies to business. Globalization and the Internet mean that companies are doing more business in other countries. For example, if you run into a problem when buying something online from an American company and you want to sue, the rules of private international law will apply.

### **3. Supranational Law**

It refers to a situation in which a nation/state surrenders to a court of its choice its right to make certain judicial decisions, which will take priority over the decisions made by the national courts. This distinguishes it from the Public International Law. For example, the supranational law is represented by the European Union (EU). All the courts within the member states of the EU are overruled by the European Court of Justice in accordance with EU laws.

### **What are International Organizations?**

The international community is an amalgamation of various voices and opinions; therefore, with the growing need for international cooperation and to ensure peace in this community, international organizations have emerged. An international organization has been defined as a form of cooperation of sovereign states based on multilateral IOs and consisting of a relatively stable range of participants, the fundamental feature of which is the existence of permanent organs with definite competences and powers acting for the carrying out of common aims. The essential elements that describe an international organization include:

- Multilateral international agreement
- Individual personality of the institution
- Permanent organs carrying out their functions

IOs are usually created amongst states or by their duly authorized representatives; however, there is no uniform rule on the same. States sometimes create

### **Flags of International Organizations**



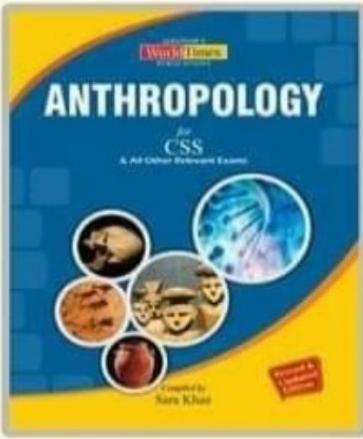
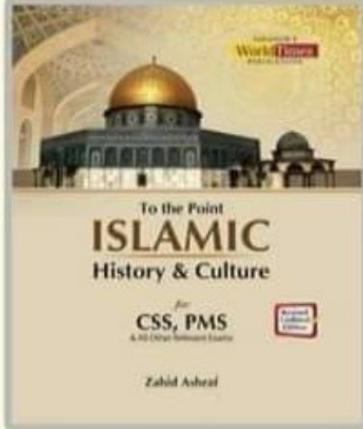
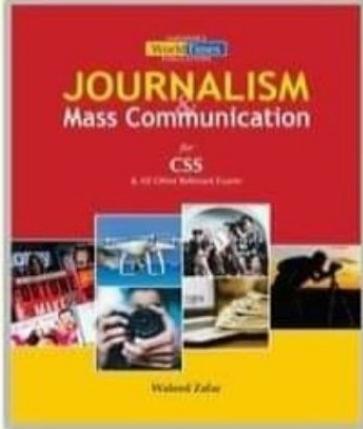
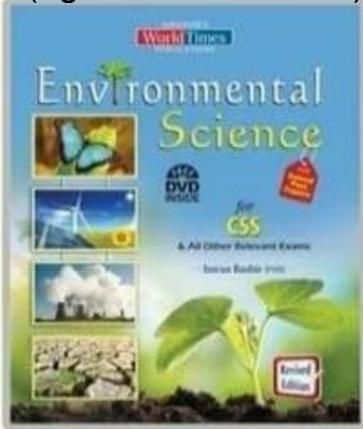
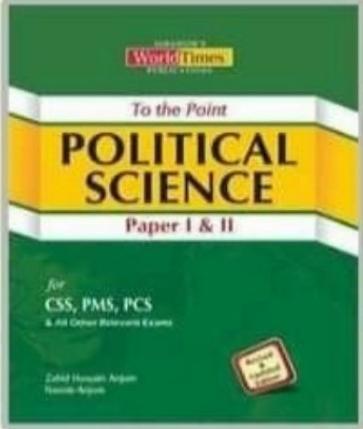
legal entities based on a treaty.

An IO may come into existence through the formation of a treaty or through an existing organization granting certain powers for forming an IO. UNICEF is an IO that was formed by the United Nations General Assembly.

### **Legal personality of IOs**

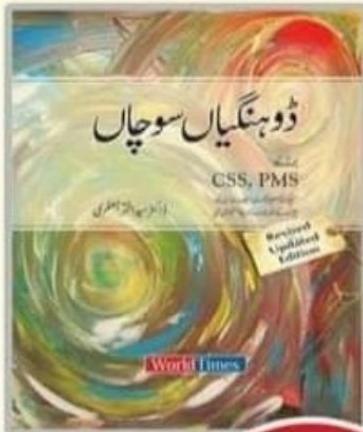
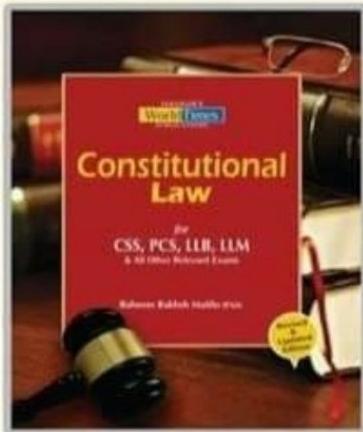
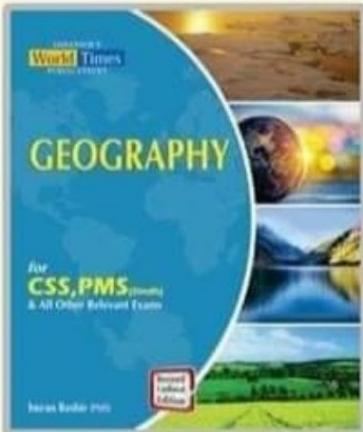
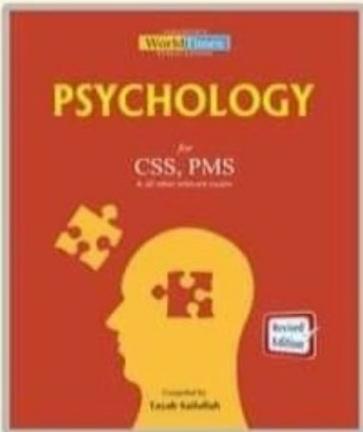
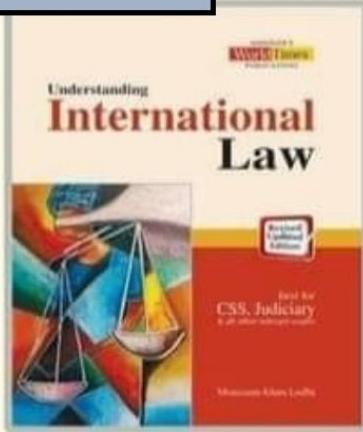
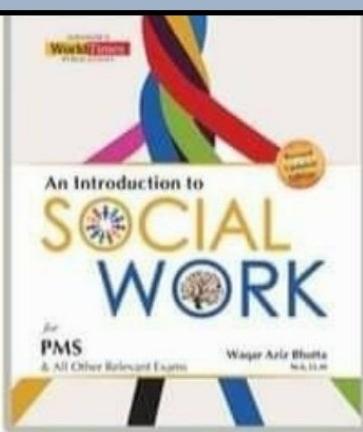
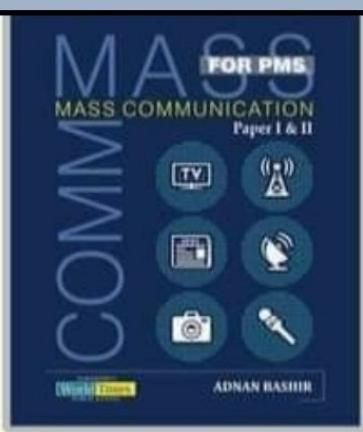
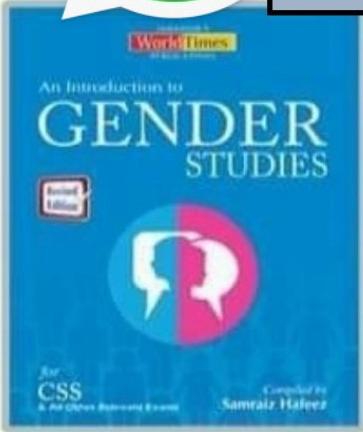
In international law, an entity that exercises international rights, obligations and powers distinct from its members on the international plane is said to possess international legal personality. Such entities are referred to as subjects of international law.

Prior to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Reparations case, there was much debate about whether IOs were subjects of international law with international legal personality. In 1948, the question arose as to whether the United Nations (UN) was a subject of international law with the ability to bring an international claim for reparation of injuries suffered. The General Assembly, by Resolution 258 (III), referred this question to the ICJ for an advisory opinion on the status and capacity of the UN under international law. After considering the characteristics of the UN under its Charter, the ICJ concluded that although the Charter did not explicitly



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confer international legal personality upon it, the UN is an international person – a “subject of international law, capable of possessing international rights and obligations, and has the capacity to maintain its rights by bringing international claims.” According to the ICJ’s ruling, the UN and consequently all other IOs have international legal personality.

#### **Rights and Responsibilities of IOs**

A subject of international law is “an entity capable of possessing international rights and duties and endowed with the capacity to take legal action in the international plane”. In the past, States were considered the only subjects of international law and the only legal persons, possessing the totality of rights and duties recognized by international law. With developments in international law, especially the establishment of the UN, other non-state actors like



IOs have emerged and it has become clear that States are not the only subjects of international law.

#### **A. Rights**

The following are some rights of IOs:

**Legal Personality:** IOs have the legal capacity to enter into treaties, contracts and other legal agreements. They can be parties to international treaties and conventions.

**Immunity:** IOs may enjoy certain immunities from the jurisdiction of national courts, similar to the immunity that states have. This immunity is typically related to their official activities and functions.

**Diplomatic Privileges:** IOs often benefit from diplomatic privileges and immunities in host states to carry out their missions effectively.

**Access to International Organizations:** IOs have the right to participate in international organizations,

such as the United Nations, and engage in diplomatic relations with other states and entities.

**Enforcement of Obligations:** IOs can seek enforcement of their rights and obligations through international dispute settlement mechanisms, such as arbitration or litigation before international courts.

#### **Duties of IOs**

**Compliance with Treaties:** IOs are bound by the terms of international treaties to which they are parties. They must fulfil their obligations under these treaties in good faith.

**Respect for Sovereignty:** IOs must respect the sovereignty of their member states and avoid interfering in their internal affairs. They are expected to cooperate with states in pursuit of shared goals.

**Accountability:** IOs are accountable to their member states and may be subject to audits and reviews to ensure transparency and responsible governance.

**Human Rights:** IOs that deal with human rights issues, such as the United Nations, are expected to uphold and promote human rights standards and principles in their activities.

**Peace and Security:** IOs responsible for peace and security, like the United Nations Security Council, have a duty to maintain international peace and security through diplomatic, economic and, if necessary, military means.

**Promotion of International Cooperation:** Many IOs have a mandate to foster international cooperation and address global challenges, such as climate change, public health crises and poverty.

#### **Conclusion**

Since IOs are entities established by international agreements or treaties among sovereign states, they do have some rights and responsibilities which they have to fulfil as per the international law. They can enter into treaties, incur international responsibility and pursue claims against member and non-member states for violations of international law. Among the sources of such obligations can be international treaties concluded by the IOs. Over the past 30 years, the rapid growth of these organizations has created an environment in which international law can exert a positive influence. □

*The writer is an Assistant Editor of JWT.*

The human drive for achievement is a fascinating enigma, fuelled by a myriad of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The pursuit of excellence is a common trait among individuals who seek to achieve remarkable results in life. The desire to excel and surpass one's own limitations is a driving force that propels you to push yourselves to new heights. In this write-up, we will delve into the various factors that motivate people to achieve outstanding results in the CSS exam and the characteristics that distinguish them from others.

#### Purpose

At the heart of every extraordinary accomplishment lies purpose. This purpose transcends the mundane and connects you to a greater cause. From inventors

striving to solve global crises to artists creating pieces that stir emotions, a profound sense of purpose propels people forward. It is the driving force that ignites the fire within you, enabling you to overcome the hurdles that stand in your path. When it comes to achieving success in the CSS exam, having specific goals will provide you with a sense of direction and purpose.

#### Passion

One of the key factors that can drive you to achieve remarkable results is your passion. A strong passion is the fuel that drives you to pursue your goals relentlessly, despite facing various obstacles and challenges along the way. People having this force are passionate about their chosen field and are more likely to invest the time and effort required to excel in CSS exam.

#### Quest for mastery

Human beings are hard-wired for growth and improvement. The relentless pursuit of mastery is a central driving force for high achievers. The desire to excel in a particular domain or skill is rooted in our evolutionary history. The thirst for mastery fuels a tireless commitment to self-improvement.

#### Dedication and hard work

Dedication and hard work are essential ingredients for success. Achieving remarkable results requires a significant amount of time and effort, as well as a willingness to make sacrifices in order to reach one's goals. Individuals who are willing to put in the hard work necessary to excel are more likely to succeed in their endeavours than those who are not willing to make the same level of commitment.

#### Psychology

The psychology of achievement is a complex interplay of various factors. Intrinsic motiva-

# Wanna Achieve Remarkable **RESULTS?**

**Unleashing your potential is the way**



Achi  
eving success in  
CSS examination is  
indeed a remarkable feat  
every aspirant wants to achieve.  
But, it is also an undeniable reality  
that only a few are able to turn their  
dreams into reality. What sets these  
apart from others is that they skilfully  
use their potential to become  
successful in their pursuits. Your  
potential is an incredible force  
that, when harnessed  
effectively, can lead you to  
truly remarkable  
results.



tion, a sense of autonomy, mastery and purpose play a pivotal role. Psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs reinforces the idea that the pursuit of self-actualization is an intrinsic human drive. Achievers are often more focused on the process rather than the outcome, relishing the journey toward success.

#### Motivations

Beyond intrinsic motivations, external factors also drive people to achieve results. Recognition, financial rewards and social validation can be powerful motivators. In a society where success is often defined by external markers, the prospect of acclaim and financial security can inspire individuals to persevere in their pursuits.

#### Role models

External factors such as mentorship and support also play a crucial role in driving individuals to achieve remarkable results. Having a mentor or role model who can provide guidance and advice can be instrumental in helping you navigate the challenges and obstacles that come with striving for excellence. A supportive network of friends, family and colleagues can also provide encouragement and motivation during difficult times.

#### Resilience

Achieving remarkable results in the CSS exam is not a straightforward path. It is often fraught with setbacks, rejections, and failures. What distinguishes high achievers is their remarkable resilience. They understand that adversity is not a roadblock but a stepping stone. The ability to bounce back from failures and learn from them is a hallmark of those who ultimately succeed.

#### Perseverance

Another important factor that drives people to achieve remarkable results in the CSS exam is perseverance. Success is not always guaranteed, and individuals who aspire to reach the pinnacle of success must be prepared to face setbacks and failures along the way. Perseverance is the ability to bounce back from disappointment and keep moving forward in the face of adversity. People who possess this quality are more likely to overcome challenges and continue making progress towards their goals, even when the going gets tough.

#### Self-discipline

Self-discipline and focus are crucial qualities that

drive individuals to achieve remarkable results in the CSS exam. In order to excel in CSS, you must have the discipline to stay focused on your goals and avoid distractions that may hinder your progress. This requires a high level of self-awareness and self-control, as well as the ability to prioritize tasks and manage time effectively. People who are able to maintain a high degree of discipline and focus are more likely to achieve outstanding results.

#### Personal fulfilment

Ultimately, achievement is an integral part of the human quest for personal fulfilment and happiness. The sense of accomplishment that comes from reaching a goal, whether big or small, brings a profound sense of satisfaction and contentment.

#### Inspiration and influence

Many achievers are motivated by the desire to inspire others, to serve as beacons of possibility in a world often overshadowed by doubt and uncertainty. Their accomplishments become a testament to the potential that resides within every individual.

#### Grit and determination

Psychologist Angela Duckworth introduced the concept of "grit" as a key driver of achievement. Grit is the unwavering perseverance and determination to achieve long-term goals. It is a steadfast resolve that keeps you on the path of progress, even when faced with adversity.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, the drive to achieve remarkable results in CSS is fuelled by a combination of passion, dedication, perseverance, self-discipline and external support. What drives people to achieve remarkable results is a rich tapestry woven with purpose, mastery, resilience and a burning desire to excel. It is the complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, the psychology of achievement, and the unwavering determination to overcome obstacles. Individuals who possess these qualities and are willing to put in the hard work and effort required to excel are more likely to achieve outstanding results. While success is never guaranteed, those who are willing to push themselves beyond their limits and strive for excellence are the ones who ultimately succeed in achieving remarkable results. ☐

*The writer guides CSS, PMS aspirants to success.*

# UK GENERAL ELECTION 2024

On May 22, Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak took the biggest gamble of his troubled premiership by calling a snap general election to be held in the United Kingdom on July 4, despite having until January next year to hold one. His announcement kicked off a six-week campaign that could see an end to 14 years of Conservative Party-led government, spanning one of the most turbulent periods in the country's modern political history.

Imran Qazi

**O**n July 4, the United Kingdom will hold its first general election since 2019. All 650 seats in the House of Commons are up for grabs, and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservatives, who have been in power for 14 years, look like long shots to retain their parliamentary majority. That outcome will usher the United Kingdom in a center-left government led by former barrister Keir Starmer. Labour have been leading in general election opinion polls since late 2021, and that lead has been huge for the entirety of Sunak's premiership and through the first weeks of the campaign. When converted to a projection of seats in parliament, those figures indicate either a comfortable Labour win or a Labour win so huge it would spell a near-wipeout for the Conservatives.

Although Sunak hasn't been able to move the polls in his favour since he became leader, and they have not narrowed since the campaign began, if his party wins, it would mean Sunak has orchestrated a shocking victory that even many in his own party believe is beyond reach - and would result in the Conservatives extending a political dynasty towards a third decade.

#### Background

PM Sunak was obliged to call an election by December 2024 and hold it by the following month, i.e. January 2025, but until that deadline - five years on from the last vote - the decision of when to stage a poll is in the gift of the prime minister, as per the UK constitution. Sunak has opted for seeking a public mandate for his efforts as he has reiterated that the economy is on the right track, and only his party can deliver stability.



#### How does the UK's electoral system work?

- The country is split into 650 constituencies. In each constituency, eligible voters, who are UK citizens or resident Irish citizens aged 18 or over on election day, in every part of the UK, will vote for a member of parliament (MP) to represent their constituency in the House of Commons, the lower house of the UK Parliament, for a term of up to five years.
- Voters get to choose one candidate on their ballot paper and the candidate with the most votes wins.
- Candidates typically represent a larger political party.
- The winning line for any political party is 326 seats.
- The party that wins the most seats in the House of Commons is likely to form the new government and the prime minister is the leader of that party.
  - However, the prime minister still has to be officially appointed by the monarch, who will formally invite him or her to form a government.
- The prime minister then appoints ministers in other departments.
- If no party achieves a majority, then parties might try to form a coalition government, where smaller parties have some ministerial roles, or the largest party might try to govern as a minority government, with informal support from other MPs.

#### Powers of the UK Prime Minister

Being the leader of His Majesty's Government, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom holds significant

authority within the country's political system, shaped by both legal provisions and political conventions. The role of the PM encompasses executive, legislative and political powers, making it one of the most influential positions in the UK government. He plays several roles including:

- deciding the direction and priorities of the UK Government
- overseeing the work of government agencies and the civil service
- selecting cabinet ministers and other members of the government
- chairing meetings of the cabinet
- representing the UK at home and abroad

Here is an overview of the key powers of the UK Prime Minister:

#### A. Executive Powers

##### a. Head of Government

**Leadership:** The PM is the head of the UK government and leads the executive branch, setting overall government policy and strategy. Ultimately, the prime minister is responsible for all government policy and decisions as (s)he has overall control of the civil service.

**Cabinet Management:** The PM selects members of the Cabinet and other ministerial positions, chairs Cabinet meetings and coordinates the work of government departments. The most senior figures are called cabinet ministers. They lead government departments - such as the Treasury and Home Office. The prime minister can, at any time, hire and fire ministers. They can also abolish government departments or create new ones. The prime minister and their ministers can also bring in new laws - as long as they are backed by Parliament.

##### b. Appointments

**Ministerial Appointments:** The PM appoints members of the Cabinet, junior ministers and other key officials, including senior civil servants and heads of public bodies.

**Judicial Appointments:** While the PM plays a role in recommending senior judicial appointments, these are formally made by the Monarch based on advice from the Judicial Appointments Commission.

#### c. Foreign Policy and National Security

**International Representation:** The PM represents the UK internationally, conducting diplomacy, attending international summits and negotiating treaties (which require ratification by Parliament).

**National Security:** The PM has significant influence over national security policy and chairs the National Security Council, overseeing intelligence and defense matters. It is also the PM who makes decisions about the UK's defence and security. For example, the PM has the power to send the UK's armed forces into action. However, recent convention says Parliament should also approve such a move, where this is possible. A number of special responsibilities also rest on the prime minister's shoulders, such as deciding whether to shoot down a hijacked or unidentified aircraft. The PM can also authorize the use of the UK's nuclear weapons.

#### B. Legislative Powers

##### a. Parliamentary Leadership

**Control of the Agenda:** The PM, with the assistance of the Leader of the House of Commons, controls the legislative agenda, deciding which bills and policies are prioritized for debate and voting.

**Party Leadership:** As the leader of the ruling party, the PM directs party strategy and ensures party discipline, crucial for passing legislation.

##### b. Legislative Proposals

**Initiation of Legislation:** The PM, through the Cabinet, initiates and proposes significant legislation, particularly key policies outlined in the party manifesto.

**Royal Assent:** While the Monarch formally grants Royal Assent to bills, this is a ceremonial function, and the PM ensures that passed legislation receives assent.

**Awards and Honours:** Honours, such as knighthoods and damehoods, are put forward by the PM. (S)he can also recommend peerages - where someone becomes a member of the House of Lords.

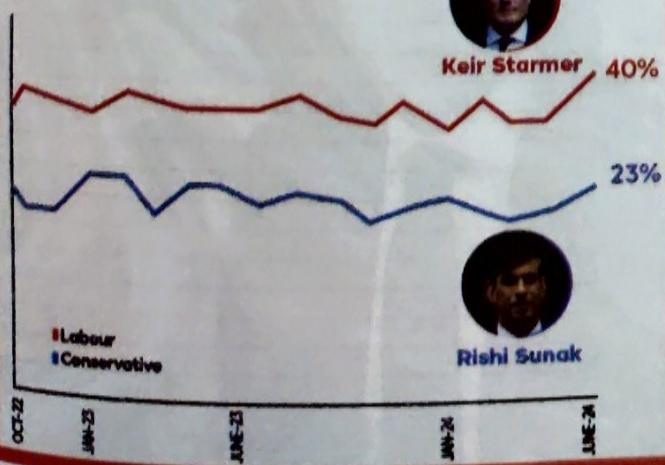
##### c. Calling Elections

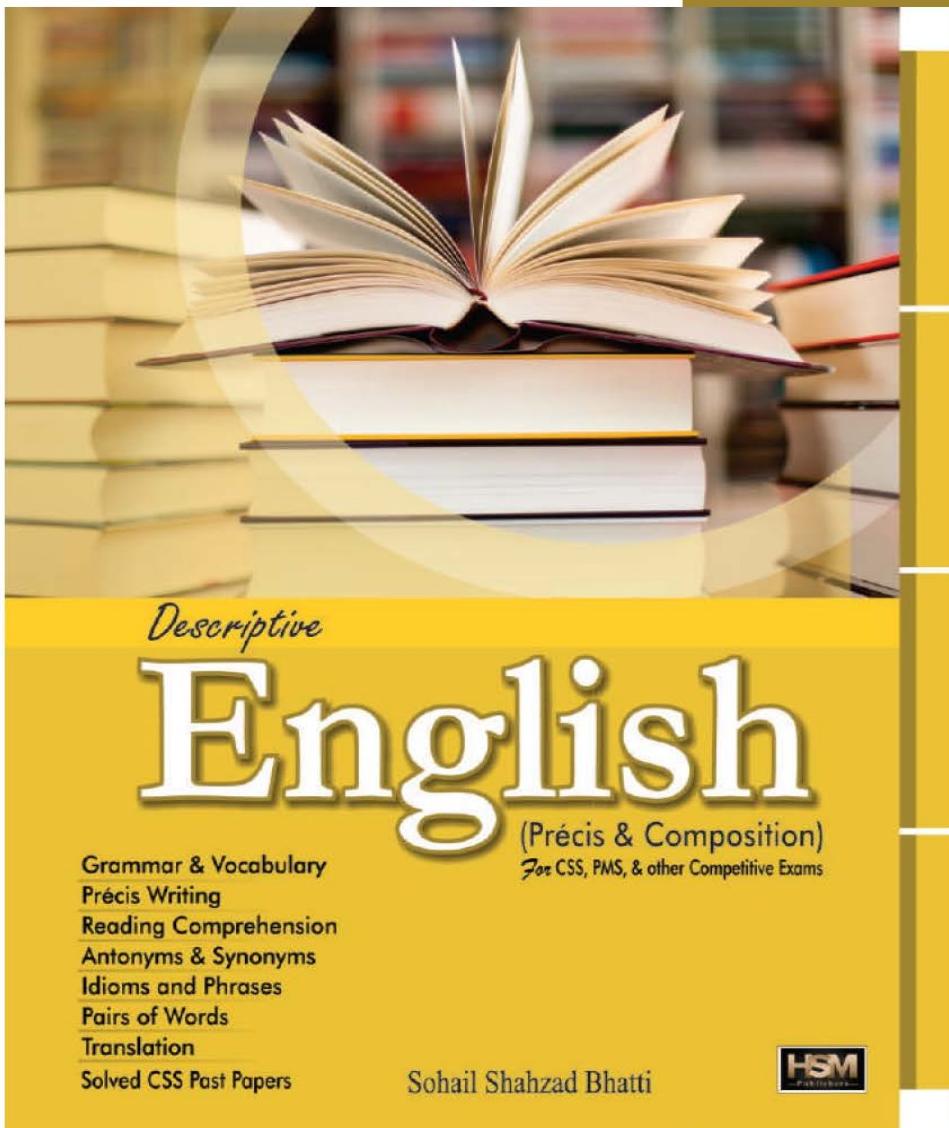
**Dissolution of Parliament:** Under the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 (partially repealed in 2022), the PM could no longer unilaterally call early elections. However, with the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022, the PM can again request the Monarch to dissolve Parliament, triggering a general election. ■

The writer is a student of politics.

## Polls show Labour to beat Sunak's Conservative gov't

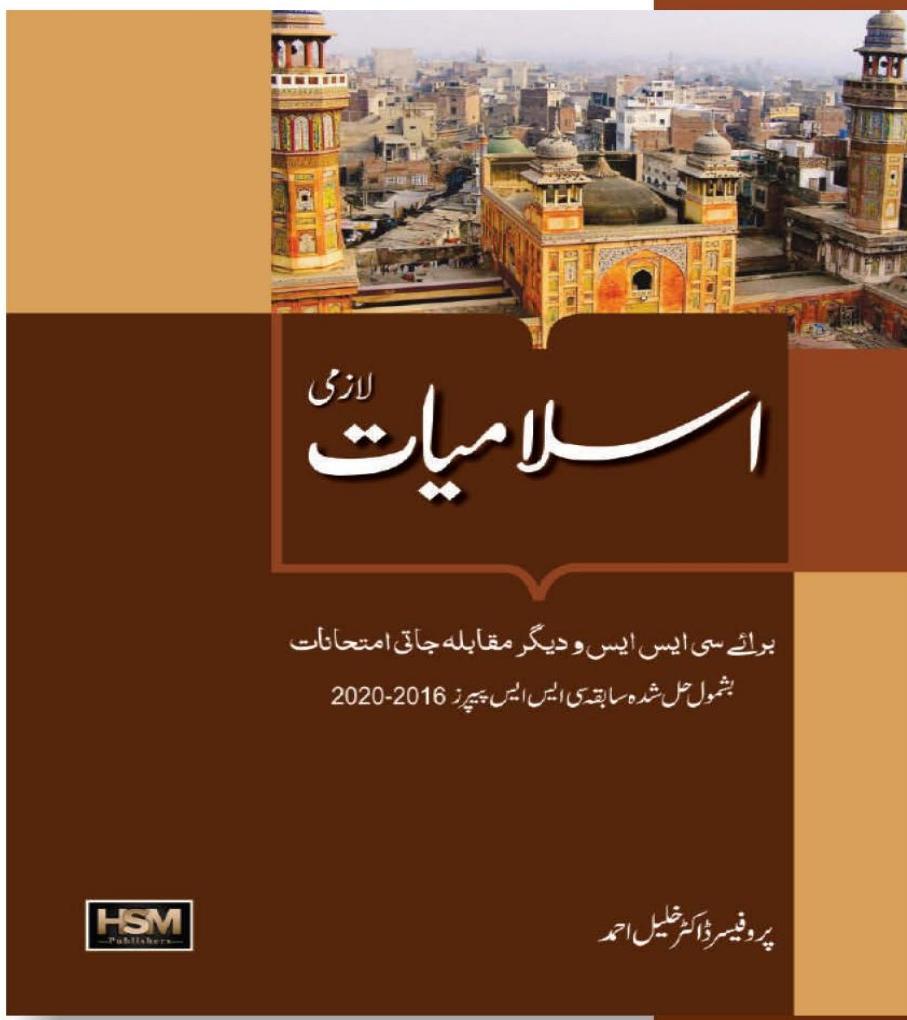
The UK will hold its first national election in five years on July 4





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## GK CORNER

Muhammad Ali

**G**erman philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once said that the greatest amount of happiness comes from living life with a maximum amount of danger and risk. French President Emmanuel Macron seems to have taken that advice to heart. He announced, on June 9, that he was dissolving the National Assembly and calling for new parliamentary elections following the far right's landslide victory in the European elections.

**Introduction**

According to article 12 of the French Constitution, the president can dissolve the National Assembly before the end of its term, leading to snap elections. The current parliament was set to continue in office until 2027. The article also says that "general elections shall be held not less than twenty nor more than forty days after the dissolution".

The dissolution of the Assembly means that all legislative

proposals currently being examined are suspended. The government would have to restart the legislative process from scratch on proposed laws in the new parliament.

**How do the elections work?**

Parliamentary elections in France are normally held every five years; the next ones were due in 2027, a month or so after the next presidential elections, in which Macron, having served two terms, would not be able to stand.

France has 49 million registered voters. There are 577 seats in the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament, including 13 overseas districts and 11 constituencies that represent French expats abroad. For an absolute majority, a party needs 289. The deputies (or MPs) are elected by universal suffrage using a two-round simple majority system. To win in the first round, a candidate must get more than

**An hour after the far-right National Rally party of Jordan Bardella and Marine Le Pen trounced Emmanuel Macron's Renew alliance in European elections, the French president went on TV to call two rounds of elections for the National Assembly, a step seen by rivals and allies as a reckless gamble that could hand political power to the far right.**

# France Goes into Election



## GK CORNER

50% of the ballots cast and the support of at least 25% of registered voters (so turnout matters).

If no candidate achieves that, the two highest scorers plus any other candidate who collected at least 12.5% of total registered voters, advance to a second round of voting seven days later. In that round, the candidate who obtains the most votes is elected.

A handful of MPs are usually elected in the first round. The vast majority of second-round contests are two-candidate races, but depending on turnout, some can involve three or even four candidates, leaving some scope for tactical agreements between parties to withdraw.

The system was designed to make it harder for candidates from parties on the extremes of the political spectrum to be elected. However, the increasing mainstreaming of RN over the past two decades has ensured the current parliament includes 88 RN deputies.

#### **When will the results be announced?**

Official results start trickling in from 8 p.m. Vote counting is usually fast and efficient, and the winners of all, or nearly all, seats will be known by the end of the evening.

#### **Who will run the government?**

The president names the prime minister, usually from the party with most seats.

For the first time in France's post-war history, the far right could win, opinion polls show, with a left-wing union seen winning the second-biggest group and President Emmanuel Macron's centrist alliance coming third.

Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN) could run a minority government if it wins the most seats without reaching that threshold, but 28-year-old party leader Jordan Bardella said it wanted an absolute majority or would not be able to carry out reforms.

#### **What happens next?**

France has had three periods of "cohabitation," where the government is of a different political stripe from the president, in its post-war history.

The government has most of the power on the domestic front, but the president is the head of the military and wields influence abroad. However, the division of power on foreign policy is not clear cut and that could be an issue for France's stance on the war in Ukraine or European Union policy.

Macron will have to deal with the new parliament for at least a year, after which he can call another snap election.



Macron won a second mandate in April 2022 and is president for three more years. Neither parliament nor the government can force him out before that.

#### **Will Jordan Bardella be the new PM?**

Not necessarily. Macron decides who will lead the next government, according to the constitution. But he does have to reflect the make-up of the new Assembly, so if National Rally is the predominant party, he could find it hard to choose someone else.

And if RN wins an absolute majority, Jordan Bardella would be the obvious choice, as nominated by the party itself. RN campaign posters proclaim him as prime minister, at 28, he is a big presence on TikTok and he has been a member of the European Parliament since 2019.

But Mr. Bardella has himself ruled out becoming prime minister if RN doesn't secure that absolute majority: "I don't want to be the president's assistant."

#### **What are the roles of parliament, government and president?**

Under the French constitution, the government "determines and conducts the policy of the nation," parliament passes laws and can overturn the government and the head of state is supposedly an arbiter ensuring the "regular functioning of public powers". The president, as guarantor of "national independence, territorial integrity and respect for treaties" is in charge of foreign, European and defence policy, while the government - with the backing, or not, of parliament - runs domestic policy.

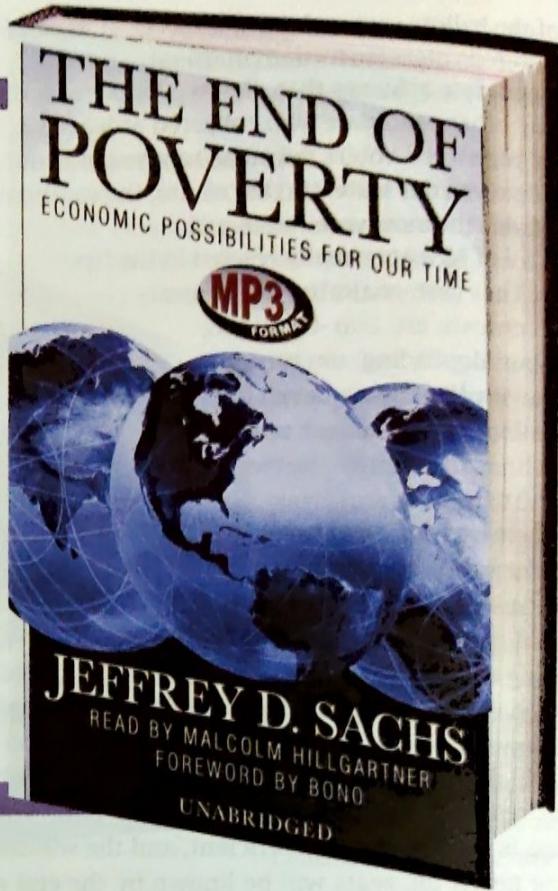
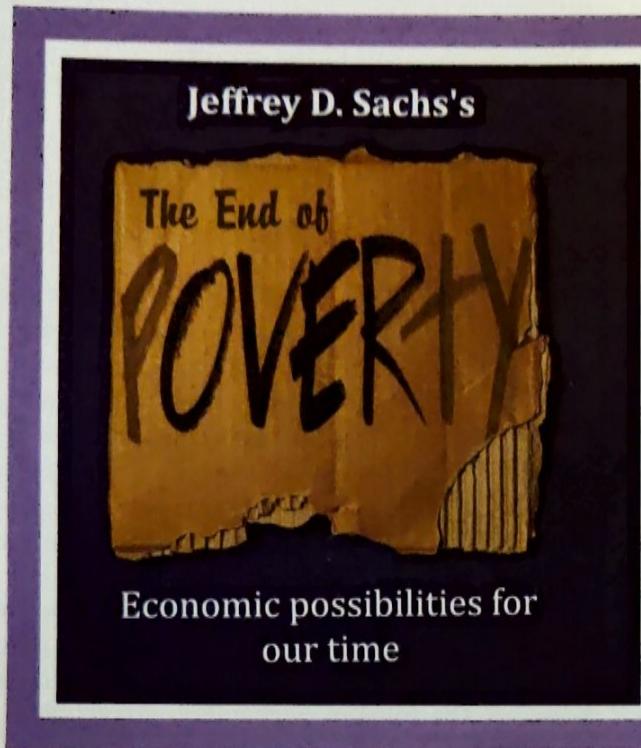
That means pensions, unemployment benefit, education, tax, immigration and nationality requirements, public employment, law and order and employment legislation, all fall, in principle, under parliament's and the government's remit.

By convention, and because they do not want to see their government overturned by a no-confidence vote or a motion of censure by parliament, presidents invariably appoint a prime minister and cabinet that will have majority support in the lower house.

When the president and parliamentary majority are politically aligned, this arrangement functions relatively smoothly. When they are not (known as cohabitation), things are harder. It is difficult to conceive of a stormier cohabitation than Macron and an RN majority. □

*The writer is a member of staff.*

## BOOK REVIEW



Review by: Mehboob Malik

**R**enowned for his work around the globe for advising economies in crisis, Jeffrey D. Sachs is a world-famous, US-based economist and policymaker. In his famous work, "The End of Poverty," about the menace of poverty that has been making the lives of billions of people around the world miserable, destitute and unbearable for centuries, he has embarked on a landmark exploration of economic prosperity and how the world can escape from extreme poverty for the world's poorest citizens. Starting with the basic definition of poverty, which, according to him, is the "lack of success of the masses to have the basic needs and facilities of life," he divides poverty into three different levels: extreme, moderate and relative.

Moving ahead, Sachs discusses in detail the structural, social, economic, geographic and political factors that have contributed to economic stagnation, either directly or indirectly. He mentions that during the era of 'economic growth', from 1800 to 2000, poverty, geographical location, political and economic policies of governments, demographic dynamics, cultural barriers, labour division and debt trap are some of the crucial causes that impeded the growth and develop-

ment of various countries.

All these factors have created a huge gap between developed and developing and underdeveloped countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa. Besides, Sachs also blames rich countries for exploiting the poor ones to complement their growth and development. The role of the Industrial Revolution and subsequent technological advancement, as he argues, cannot be overlooked. The Industrial Revolution and modern technology have also enabled rich countries to achieve remarkable economic progress in the last two hundred years.

After a very detailed discussion on poverty, its causes and how it impacts economic growth, the writer, based on his personal and professional experience, moves on to give a pathway that can lead not only to economic development but also to the eradication of poverty in different African and Asian countries. One of the most important methods that the writer has proposed is "Clinical Economics". He states, "I propose a new method for development economics, one that I call Clinical Economics, to underscore the similarities between good development economics and good clinical medicine."

In his concept of Clinical Economics, the author argues that a 'crisis-ridden economy' of a country can be treated the way a doctor treats his/her patients in a clinic. When a doctor sees a patient, he/she deals with several complex and inter-linked phenomena. First of all, a doctor knows that the body of a human being is very complex. Abnormality in one part can lead to problems in other parts. Therefore, from the patient's initial symptoms of a disease to their spillover effect on other parts of the body, and from the diagnosis to medical ethics and codes, a doctor has to be very careful and sensitive about the case of his/her patient. Failure at any stage of the treatment could result in other critical abnormalities and even death.

In the same way, the writer is of the view that poor and impoverished economies also share challenges similar to those of a clinical patient. Like a human being, economies are also complex systems.

Mr Sachs says, "Like the circulatory, respiratory and other bodily systems, societies do also have distinct systems for transport, power, communications, law enforcement, national defence, taxation and other domains that must operate properly for the entire economy to function appropriately. As with a human being, the failure of one system can lead to cascades of failure in other parts of the economy." For example, when the IMF, a global financial institution that helps countries get out of financial crises, gives bailout packages to developing countries, it often leads to inflation and hikes in electricity prices, which may further lead to poverty, social chaos, political instability and economic recession.

Therefore, economic practitioners should think very deeply about the structural causes that hamper economic growth and give birth to poverty. They also need to "prescribe appropriate remedies that are well tailored to each country's specific conditions." The author is of the opinion that if the IMF wants to bring economic stability to a country, it has to

look beyond the traditional causes of corruption, trade barriers and the law and order situation, but rather keep in consideration geography, climate conditions, poverty traps, gender gaps and gender roles. For example,

"for the IMF and World Bank to tell Ghana to liberalize its trade, nce its budget and attract ign investors may be fine and good, but it will be ineffective if not combined with trade reforms in the rich countries, debt cancellation, increased foreign financial assistance for investments in basic infrastructure and support to the West African region as a whole to maintain peace."

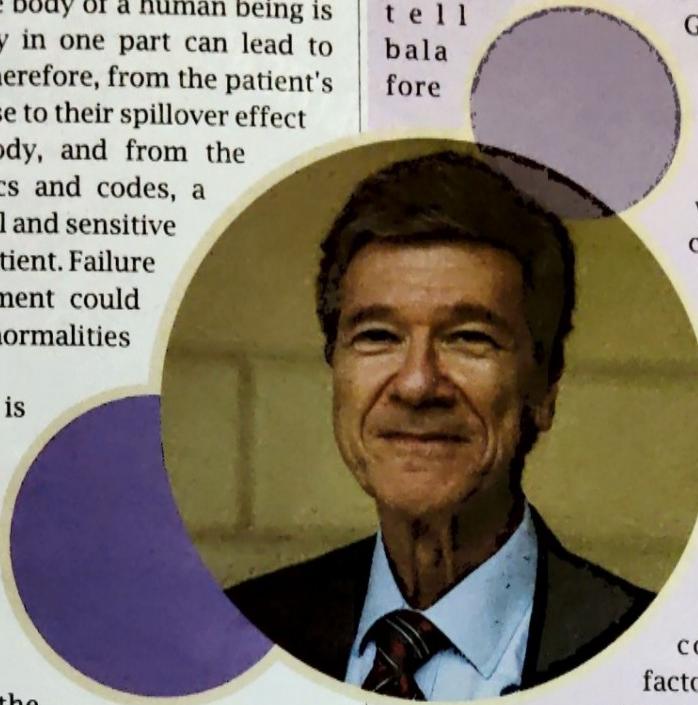
Therefore, when a clinical economist deals with a crisis-ridden economy, he/she has to keep in consideration important factors, which include: the level of

poverty and the risk factors that could exacerbate it; economic policies, which include management of resources, fiscal policy, human capital, infrastructure and the taxation system;

physical geography—ports, waterways, natural resources, demography, physical conditions such as climate change, rainfall, fertility of the soil and diseases—both human and plant diseases; cultural barriers; and geopolitics. All these factors are directly linked to one another, and mistreatment of one of them can result in economic disaster.

To cap it all, the book is very pertinent and relevant for economic experts and policymakers. It can help them understand the factors that hamper a country's economic growth and development. Moreover, the book also contains various strategies and methods that can be harnessed to bring stability, the eradication of poverty, and prosperity. In this regard, the "clinical economics" approach, which Mr. Sachs has propounded, is timely and relevant. □

*The writer is a CSS aspirant.*



**"The vast differences in power contributed to faulty social theories of these differences that are still with us today. When a society is economically dominant, it is easy for its members to assume that such dominance reflects a deeper superiority – whether religious, racial, genetic, cultural, or institutional – rather than an accident of timing or geography."**

# May-June '24

*World  
in Focus*

## NATIONAL



M. Usman Butt

**May 16:** Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi co-chaired the Fifth Round of the China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue in Beijing.

**May 16:** The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly passed 11-month budget of Rs1,456 billion for 2023-24.

**May 16:** The two-day Pakistan Literature Festival 2024 concluded in Quetta.

**May 17:** PML-N MNA Ali Pervez Malik was appointed the Minister of State for Finance and Revenue and was also given additional charge of Power Division.

**May 17:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (PMSS) assigned the additional portfolio of National Heritage and Culture Division to Attaullah Tarar who already holds the portfolio of Information and Broadcasting.

**May 17:** Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz (CM Punjab) gave approval to release funds to equip the police force with quadcopter drones and other latest technologies.

**May 17:** Shahzeb Khan became the first taekwondoka of the country to win silver medal in the Asian Taekwondo Championship, in Vietnam.

**May 17:** Pakistan defeated Turkmenistan to win the Central Asian Volleyball League.

**May 18:** PMSS constituted an eight-member high-powered Economic Advisory Council (EAC) under his leadership.

**May 18:** Justice Munib Akhtar took oath as acting Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP).

**May 18:** Pakistan's Nida Dar etched her name in history by becoming the leading wicket-taker in Women's T20 Internationals with 137 scalps.

**May 18:** Seven Pakistanis made it to the Forbes 30 Under 30 list for Asia 2024.

**May 19:** The federal Ministry of Education commenced Rs4 billion scholarship programme for the needy, talented students nationwide.

**May 19:** Pakistan hosted an internationally recognised marathon, ONE RUN, in Karachi for the first time.

**May 19:** Renowned Brahvi and Urdu language poet and story writer Mir Mohammad Ulfat passed away.

**May 20:** The Punjab Assembly passed the Defamation Bill, 2024, rejecting all amendments proposed by the opposition.

**May 21:** Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur (CM KP) appointed Brig (retd) Muhammad Musaddiq Abbassi his Special Assistant on Anti-Corruption.

**May 21:** To provide easy access to gender-based violence response services, the National Commission on the Status of Women launched 'Humqadam' phone application.

**May 21:** Sirbaz Khan became the second Pakistani climber to surmount Mount Everest without the use of artificial oxygen.

**May 22:** PMSS allocated additional portfolio of Inter-Provincial Coordination to his Adviser on Political and Public Affairs, Rana Sanaullah Khan.

**May 22:** Over a 100 stolen artefacts worth over \$13 million were handed back to Pakistan by the United States.

**May 23:** The UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan made commitment of investing \$10 billion in multiple sectors in Pakistan.

**May 23:** After refusal of Barrick Gold Corporation to sell out its stakes in the multibillion-dollar Reko Diq project, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia agreed to strike a deal whereby Islamabad is ready to sell its 15 percent shares to Saudi investor.

**May 23:** The Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet (ECC) approved a \$2.58 million compensation package for the Chinese nationals who lost their lives in Dasu attack.

**WORLD  
DAY  
AGAINST  
CHILD  
LABOUR**

JUNE 12TH



**The Destination Earth Initiative**

A software model of Earth, meant to simulate and monitor environmental hazard, while finding ways to mitigate climate change, has begun its monitoring and predictive mission. The Destination Earth Initiative resulted in a digital model of the planet to simulate natural phenomena by utilising an unprecedented amount of data. The model combines climate science with artificial intelligence powered by supercomputers including the LUMI computer located in the Finnish city Kajaani, where the inauguration ceremony took place.

**May 23:** PMSS included former McKinsey Pakistan Managing Director Salman Ahmad into key economic bodies.

**May 24:** A Pakistani lady scholar Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper was appointed the new director of the prestigious Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC.

**May 24:** The Supreme Court (SCP) asked the state to fulfil its obligation of setting up child-friendly courts under specially trained professional judges.

**May 26:** Veteran actor Talat Hussain passed away.

**May 27:** Acting President Yusuf Raza Gilani signed two new ordinances, NAB (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024 and the Elections Act (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024.

**May 27:** PMSS declared May 28 as a public holiday in celebration of Youm-e-Takbeer.

**May 28:** Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif assumed the office of PMLN president for a third time.

**May 29:** SCP's registrar, in a letter to British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, criticized her recent speech targeting the Feb. 8 general elections and called on the United Kingdom to learn from their past mistakes and move on.

**May 29:** The government enforced the Pakistan Essential Services (Maintenance) Act, 1952 for six months, granting Pakistan International Airlines the authority to take punitive action against employees who disobey lawful orders.

**May 29:** The IHC restrained telecom companies from tapping phones for surveillance in the audio leaks case.

**May 29:** Pakistan and Saint Lucia, a Caribbean Island country, formalised their diplomatic relations.

**May 29:** The Federal Ministry of Education appointed Pakistan's renowned mountaineer Naila Kayani its goodwill ambassador for girls' education.

**May 29:** The federal government appointed Sarfraz Durrani as Managing Director of the Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO).

**May 30:** The Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) announced the successful launch of Pakistan's Multi-Mission Communication Satellite, PakSat-MM1, from XiChang Satellite Launch Centre (XSLC), China.

**May 30:** Former foreign secretary Dr Asad Majeed Khan was nominated secretary general of the 10-member Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO).

**May 30:** The IHC restrained the intelligence agencies, including the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Intelligence Bureau (IB), and police authorities from conducting surveillance of citizens, except in accordance with requirements of the Fair Trial Act and warrants duly issued by a

judge of the high court.

**May 31:** The federal government appointed Syed Zafar Ali Shah Federal Secretary, Maritime Affairs Division.

**May 31:** Dr Shahzad Baig, who was heading the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) as National Coordinator, resigned.

**May 31:** Saudi oil-sector giant Aramco completed the purchase of 40 percent equity stake in Gas & Oil Pakistan

**About the World Environment Day 2024**

- World Environment Day is celebrated every year on June 5.
- Theme of the day: "Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience."
- Led by United Nation to encourage awareness and action to protect the environment.
- Day aims to raise awareness about the environmental issues and inspire people and government to take action to protect the environment.

**Background**

- The day began with the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment commenced in Stockholm, Sweden, on June 5th.
- The conference initiated discussions on environmental protection.
- To commemorate this event, the inaugural World Environment Day was observed a year later, in 1973.
- Since then, World Environment Day has been celebrated annually on June 5th.



## GK CORNER

Ltd as part of its global retail expansion.

**June 01:** Brigadier Helen Mary Roberts, affiliated with the Army Medical Corps, made history by becoming the first female from Christian and a minority community to be promoted to Pakistan Army's rank of one-star officer in the country's 77-year history.

**June 01:** Former IGP Gohar Zaman passed away.

**June 01:** Noted radio and TV artiste Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah died. He was 94.

**June 01:** The National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) and China-Pakistan International Silk Road Industry Investment Management Company Ltd. signed an MoU to facilitate investment in key projects, promote industrial cooperation, support the establishment of special economic zones (SEZs) and boost bilateral trade.

**June 02:** Pakistani-American tech entrepreneur Zia Chishti won a major defamation lawsuit against a magazine and its editor.

**June 03:** The IHC annulled the conviction of jailed PTI founder Imran Khan and party's Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the infamous cipher case.

**June 03:** Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed to implement the mechanism of Temporary Admission Document (TAD) to streamline and regulate the movement of cargo vehicles.

**June 03:** PMSS directed to immediately abolish Pakistan Public Works Department (Pak PWD) following its deteriorating performance.

**June 03:** The Pakistani rowing team bagged second prize in the 63rd Grand Moscow Regatta.

**June 03:** Mahnoor Ali, an 11-year-old Pakistani squash player, clinched the gold medal in the Under-13 category at the Lion Junior City Open 2024, held in Singapore.

**June 04:** The federal government restored the current budget of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for the financial year 2024-25 to Rs65 billion.

**June 04:** Pakistan and Saint Vincent, an island country in the eastern Caribbean, established formal diplomatic relations.

**June 04:** Twenty organisations from around the country were awarded with the newly instituted "Pakistan Environmental Awards" for their exemplary efforts in promoting sustainable and environment-friendly practices.

**June 04:** Pakistan Football League (PFL), the first-ever franchise-based league in Pakistan's football history, was officially launched.

**June 05:** During PMSS's visit, Pakistan and China further forged their economic collaboration by signing 32 MOUs in energy, infrastructure development, farming, engineering, construction and logistics sectors.

**June 06:** President Asif Ali Zardari promulgated the State-owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024, paving the way for the dissolution of the boards of power, petroleum, and other state-run companies.

**June 06:** Pakistan World Cup T20 campaign got off to the worst possible start as the debutant US stunned the green shirts in the Super Over.

**June 06:** Pakistan secured 182 votes to become one of the non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for an 8th term.

**June 07:** In a meeting at the historic Great Hall of the People in Beijing, PMSS and Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed their resolve to further deepen cooperation across diverse fields ranging from political and security to economic, trade and people-to-people exchanges.

**June 07:** The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) recommended elevation of chief justices of the LHC and SHC to the Supreme Court, besides recommending the elevation of an LHC judge to the apex court.

**June 07:** CM Punjab announced launching the Punjab Kisan Bank, the Green Tractor Scheme and the Oil Seed Promotion Program.

**June 07:** Acting Governor Punjab Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan signed the controversial Defamation Bill 2024 into law.

**June 07:** Pakistan and China signed 23 MOUs and agreements to deepen bilateral cooperation in areas including transport infrastructure, industry, energy, agriculture, media, health, water and socioeconomic development.

**June 07:** President Zardari conferred the "Nishan-e-Pakistan" award upon Prince Rahim Aga Khan in recognition of his meritorious services and role in the development, progress, and betterment of Pakistan and its people.

**June 07:** President Zardari constituted a 13-member highest economic decision forum – National Economic Council – under the chairmanship of the prime minister and comprising four chief ministers.

**June 07:** Pakistan and Russia signed an MoU on coopera-



**Investment-to-GDP Ratio**

Pakistan's total investment has declined to its lowest ebb since 1972-73 and now it stands at 13.1% of GDP in the fiscal year 2023-24 despite a deafening chorus of boosting up the investment climate through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

The investment-to-GDP ratio stood at 12.8% in the fiscal year 1972-43, then it had remained on the higher side in all subsequent fiscal years since then and clinched highest-ever position of 26.2% of GDP in 2001-02. In the fiscal year 2014-15, it stood at 17.2% of GDP, and 17.1% of GDP in 2017-18 during the tenure of PMLN. During the tenure of Imran Khan, the ratio stood at 15.6% in 2021-22. It stood at 14.1% of GDP in 2022-23 under the PDM-led government, but then it witnessed the lowest ebb and declined to 13.1% of GDP in 2023-24.

On the other hand, the country's economy experienced a low growth rate of 2.38% compared to population growth of over 2.6%, while inflation on an average ranges between 25% and 26%, portraying persistent stagflation over the last few years. However, the overall size of Pakistan's economy in dollar terms had gone up to \$373 billion in the current fiscal year 2023-24 against revised estimates of \$338 billion for the last financial year.

According to provisional figures, approved by the National Accounts Committee (NAC), the per capita income has been worked out at \$1,676 for the current fiscal year, while the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) worked out per capita income in dollar terms at \$1,680.

tion in Railway sector.

**June 07:** Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Pechuho inaugurated Pakistan's first Shariah-compliant 'Human Milk Bank' and Early Childhood Centre at the Sindh Institute of Child Health and Neonatology (SICHN) in Karachi.

**June 07:** Pakistan Post, in collaboration with WWF-Pakistan, issued stamps showcasing Kashmir Markhor to conserve and protect the Markhor population and their habitats in the country.

**June 07:** Global press freedom watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) called on Pakistan's new federal and provincial authorities to address 'an alarming deterioration in press freedom' over recent months.

**June 08:** At the Foreign Ministers Extraordinary Meeting of D-8 council, which was held in Istanbul (Turkiye), Pakistan demanded implementation of the order of the International Court of Justice, directing Israel to immediately halt its military offensive in Rafah.

**June 08:** Oxford University student from Balochistan Israr Kakar won the Oxford Union Presidency, making history as the third Pakistani and the first person from Balochistan to achieve this honour.

**June 08:** Pakistan's premier cyclist Ali Ilyas created history when he won gold medal in individual time trial in the Asian Road Cycling Championship in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

**June 09:** Legendary voice of Radio Pakistan, Urdu newscaster Taskeen Zafar passed away. She was 67.

**June 10:** The NEC approved the 13th Five-year Development Plan.

**June 10:** The NEC decided to continue funding constituency-based schemes and ongoing provincial projects, while approving an indicative national development plan worth Rs3.792 trillion

for the next fiscal year to increase the economic growth rate to 3.6% from the current 2.4%.

**June 10:** In a rare display of harmony between the government and the opposition, all 42 Senate standing committees were notified within the stipulated period.

**June 10:** Pakistan senior men's volleyball team lost to Qatar in the final of the AVC Challenge Cup.

**June 10:** Pakistan under-18 volleyball team demolished strong Iran to claim gold in the Central Asian Volleyball Association Under-18 Volleyball Championship.

**June 11:** The World Bank approved \$1 billion in the second round of additional financing for Pakistan to fund the Dasu Hydropower Stage I (DHP I) Project.

**June 11:** The SCP ordered the closure of all restaurants, including Monal, operating in the Margalla Hills National

## When Extreme Heat Becomes Deadly

Symptoms for heat exhaustion and heatstroke

### HEAT EXHAUSTION

Heat exhaustion can progress to heatstroke if left untreated

Core body temperature maintained at less than 40°C (104°F)

Mild confusion, irritability, anxiety, poor co-ordination

Nausea, weakness, headaches, thirst, feeling dizzy and faint, less urine

Flushed, sweaty, fast pulse

### HEATSTROKE

Heat exhaustion can progress to heatstroke if left untreated

Core body temperature of 40°C (104°F) or higher

No sweating, skin may feel deceptively cold and dry, pale

Rapid breathing, low blood pressure

Coma, seizures

### WHAT TO DO

- Drink water
- Cool compress
- Cool shower or bath
- Lie down in shade or air-con

### WHAT TO DO

- Call for emergency help
- Rapid cooling using cold water, fanning skin, ice packs
- Administer fluids
- Do not give them aspirin or paracetamol

Sources: Patient.info, Statista research

## GK CORNER

**Methanol**

Methanol is the simplest alcohol ( $\text{CH}_3\text{OH}$ ) known as methyl alcohol.

It is a chemical building block for several everyday products, including plastics, paints, car parts and construction materials.

People who may come in contact with toxic methanol content hand sanitizers are vulnerable to several side effects including "nausea, vomiting, headache, blurred vision, coma, seizures, permanent blindness, permanent damage to the central nervous system, or death."

Methanol also is a clean energy resource used to fuel cars, trucks, buses, ships, fuel cells, boilers and cook stoves.

**SALIENT FEATURES OF FY25 BUDGET**

GDP growth target set at 3.6pc  
Pension to be increased by 15pc, govt employees' salaries by 25pc  
Inflation target set at 12pc compared to 21pc last year  
BISP allocation increased from Rs466bn to Rs592bn  
Subsidy allocation of Rs65bn for Utility Stores Corporation, Rs10bn kept for Ramzan package  
Sales tax to increase from 15 to 18pc on tier 1 textile, leather retailers  
Standard tax rate of 18pc on mobile phones; tax on imported phones over \$500 to remain 25pc  
Petroleum levy on petrol and diesel increased by Rs20 per litre  
Federal Excise Duty (FED) on cement to increase by Rs1,000 per tonne  
Exemption on customs duties on import of hybrid vehicles, luxury electric vehicles removed  
Concessions on import of solar panels, related raw materials and equipment

Park.

**June 11:** The Economic Survey for 2023-24 was unveiled according to which Pakistan's economy experienced persistent stagflation for the last two consecutive years. The country clinched a low GDP growth rate of 2.38% and average inflation of 26% for the outgoing fiscal year.

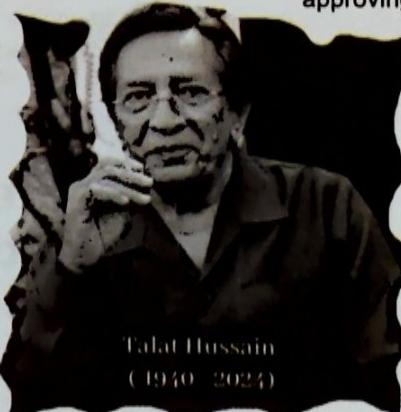
**June 11:** The Passport and Immigration Directorate banned the issuance of passports to asylum seekers abroad.

**June 11:** OGDCL emerged victorious in the President's Trophy Grade-II final.

**June 11:** Haris Rauf became the second Pakistani bowler to have taken 100 wickets in T20 cricket.

**June 11:** Dr Shamshad Akhtar was appointed the chairperson of the Board of Directors of the PSX.

**June 12:** Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb



Talat Hussain  
(1940 - 2024)

**Colombo Process**  
Colombo Process is a regional consultative process comprising 12 Member States of Asia (countries of origin of migrant workers).

**Member States:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

It provides an important platform for consultations on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour. The Process is non-binding and decision-making is by consensus.

The Process is governed by Ministerial Consultations wherein recommendations and action plans are discussed and adopted by the Ministers of the participating countries.

unveiled an expansionary budget proposal of Rs18.8776 trillion for FY24-25, featuring a record-high deficit of Rs8.5 trillion.

**June 13:** Punjab Minister for Finance Mujtaba Shujau Rehman presented the largest-ever annual budget of the province with a total outlay of Rs5,307 billion for 2024-25.

**June 13:** Weightlifter Haider Sultan snared gold in the Brics Games in Kazan, Russia.

**June 13:** Mumtaz Ali Shah, a retired senior officer of the Pakistan Administrative Services (PAS), took oath of the office of Federal Insurance Ombudsman.

**June 14:** The Sindh government proposed a balanced budget for the FY 2024-25 with an outlay of Rs3.056 trillion.

**June 14:** Pakistan were knocked out of the World Cup T20 2024, as the US became the second team to make it to Super Eight from the pool.

**June 14:** PMSS constituted two high-level committees for rightsizing of the federal government and to rationalize the structure of the Pakistani missions abroad for better efficiency and performance.

**June 14:** The Parliamentary Committee on the Appointment of Judges approved the names of judges proposed by the JCP for elevation to the Supreme Court.

**June 14:** Pakistan green-lighted commercial farming of its first genetically modified (GM) food crop, approving two varieties of sugarcane developed by the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

**June 14:** PMSS relieved finance minister from the chairmanship of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (EcneC).

**June 15:** While addressing the nation on the completion of government's 100 days in office, PMSS pledged to rid the country of the IMF, saying the next deal for a bailout package with the global lender will be the last in the country's history.

**June 15:** The World Bank approved \$150 million to improve access to and delivery of quality education services in Punjab.

**June 15:** The naval forces of Pakistan and Türkiye held Turgutreis-9 exercise in the Eastern Mediterranean to enhance operational readiness and foster cooperation.

## INTERNATIONAL

**May 16:** Canada imposed its first-ever sanctions on "extremist" Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

**May 16:** At the conclusion of its summit in Manama (Bahrain), the 22-member Arab League called for a United Nations peacekeeping force in the Palestinian territories.

**May 17:** Noted Pakistani-American Dr Asif Mahmood was appointed a new member, otherwise designated as commissioner, of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom.

**May 17:** Turkmenistan unveiled an 80-metre high bronze statue, one of the tallest in the world, in honour of its most famous national poet, Magtymguly Pyragy.

**May 17:** Saudi Arabia held its first fashion show featuring swimsuit models.

**May 17:** The World Health Organisation (WHO) released updated Bacterial Priority Pathogens List (BPPL) 2024, featuring 15 families of antibiotic-resistant bacteria grouped into critical, high and medium categories for prioritisation.

**May 18:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pardoned seven generals imprisoned for their role in the military coup that overthrew an Islamist government in 1997.

**May 18:** A court in St. Petersburg (Russia) seized over €700 million worth of assets belonging to three western banks — UniCredit, Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank.

**May 18:** Bayer Leverkusen became the first team in Bundesliga history to go unbeaten through an entire season.

**May 19:** Two top Biden administration officials held indirect talks with Iranian counterparts to avoid escalating regional attacks.

**May 19:** A helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his foreign minister crashed on the way back from a visit to the border with Azerbaijan, in Iran's northwest.

**May 19:** Elon Musk launched his Starlink service on Indonesia's resort island of Bali.

**May 19:** The DR Congo military thwarted an "attempted coup" near the offices of President Felix Tshisekedi in Kinshasa involving "foreigners and Congolese".

**May 19:** US troops began withdrawing from the military-led state of Niger.

**May 19:** Manchester City created English football history, overcoming West Ham United to win their fourth straight Premier League title.

**May 20:** Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei announced that vice president Mohammad Mokhber would assume interim presidential duties until elections are held within 50 days.

**May 20:** The first trial in France of officials from the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad opened.

**May 20:** The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) ruled in favour of nine small island states that brought a case to seek increased protection of the world's oceans from catastrophic climate change.

**May 22:** The Asian Kabaddi Federation imposed a ban on the Indian federation and its national team's international participation.

**May 22:** British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that the next general election in the United Kingdom would be held on July 4.

**May 22:** Jenny Erpenbeck and Michael Hofmann won the 2024 International Booker Prize for Erpenbeck's "personal and political" novel Kairos, translated by Hofmann from German.

**May 22:** Vietnam's parliament voted in public security minister To Lam as the country's new president.

**May 23:** Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree allowing the confiscation of assets inside Russia belonging to the United States, its citizens and companies, to compensate those hit by Western sanctions against Moscow.

**May 23:** The UN General Assembly voted to establish July 11 as "International Day of Remembrance of the Srebrenica Genocide."

**May 24:** The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel to halt military operations in Rafah "immediately".

**May 25:** A meeting of G7 finance ministers was held in Stresa, Italy.

**May 25:** Manchester United defeated Manchester City to lift the FA Cup.

**May 26:** The Modi government gave a one-month extension in service to incumbent Indian Army Chief Gen. Manoj C. Pande.

**May 26:** The West Indies beat South Africa to take an unassailable lead in the three-match T20I series.

**May 26:** The Comoros swore in President Azali Assoumani for his fourth term.

**May 26:** Al-Ain crushed Yokohama F Marinos in the second leg of the Asian Champions League final.

**May 26:** Richard Sherman, the writer behind songs in classic Disney movies such as 'Mary Poppins' and 'The Jungle Book' died at the age of 95.

**May 26:** Kenyan Beatrice Chebet shattered the women's 10,000 metres world record.

**May 27:** Bette Nash, the world's longest-serving flight attendant, died, aged 88, after nearly 67 years of working in the skies.

**May 27:** EU foreign ministers agreed to call a meeting with



Israel to get it to explain its actions in its Rafah offensive despite a UN court ruling.

**May 27:** China poured more than \$47 billion into the country's largest-ever chip investment fund.

**May 27:** Chad's new Prime Minister, Allamaye Halina, announced his first government marking an end to three years of military rule in the desert nation.

**May 28:** Spain, Ireland and Norway formally recognised a Palestinian state.

**May 28:** Taiwan's parliament passed a package of controversial bills to expand its power.

**May 28:** Georgia's parliament voted to adopt a divisive "foreign influence" law targeting NGOs and the media, overcoming a presidential veto.

**May 28:** Frenchwoman Alize Cornet's career ended after her record-extending 69th consecutive Grand Slam appearance at the French Open.

**May 28:** Cristiano Ronaldo broke the record for the most goals in a Saudi Pro League season when he struck for the 34th and 35th time in Al Nassr's final game of the campaign.

**May 29:** The world's first wooden satellite was built by Japanese researchers who said their tiny cuboid craft will be blasted off on a SpaceX rocket in September.

**May 29:** Temperatures in India's capital soared to a national record-high of 52.3 degrees Celsius.

**May 30:** The China-Arab States Cooperation Forum was held in Beijing.

**May 30:** A New York jury convicted Donald Trump on all charges in his hush money case – historic first criminal trial of a former US president.

**May 30:** Spain's parliament gave the final green light to a controversial amnesty bill for Catalan separatists.

**May 31:** US President Joe Biden approved Ukraine using US weapons to strike targets inside Russia.

**May 31:** A small, seemingly unremarkable fern that only grows on a remote Pacific island was crowned the Guinness World Record holder for having the largest genome of any organism on Earth.

**May 31:** South Africa's ruling African National Congress lost its majority in the national parliament after its worst electoral result ever.

**May 31:** The UN Security Council unanimously decided that the United Nations political mission in Iraq would leave the country at the end of 2025.

**June 01:** El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele was sworn in for a second term – He was reelected in February with 85 percent of the vote.

**June 02:** Businesswoman Halla Tomasdottir was declared the winner of Iceland's presidential election.

**June 02:** China's Chang'e-6 lunar probe successfully landed on the far side of the Moon.

**June 02:** Real Madrid won the Champions League for the 15th time.

**June 03:** Claudia Sheinbaum was elected Mexico's first

## Where the UN's Refugee Agency Allocates Its Funds

UNHCR operations receiving the highest amount of flexible funds in 2024 (in million U.S. dollars)\*

Ukraine	36.1
Lebanon	33.7
Sudan	32.2
Ethiopia	28.3
South Sudan	27.7

Top 5 contributors of flexible funding YTD



woman president.

**June 03:** Austria's first woman chancellor, Brigitte Bierlein, who led the country into fresh elections after the government collapsed in 2019 in a spectacular corruption scandal, died.

**June 03:** Simone Biles won a record-extending ninth all-around title at the US championships.

**June 04:** Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) failed to secure an overall majority of its own in the general elections.

**June 05:** Humanity now faces an 80 percent chance that Earth's temperatures will at least temporarily exceed the key 1.5-degree Celsius mark during the next five years, the UN predicted.

**June 05:** Slovenia became the latest country to recognise a state of Palestine.

**June 05:** The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) passed a resolution calling on Iran to step up cooperation

in      on      by

In cash	On holiday	By cheque
In advance	On business	By credit card
In general	On a journey	By mistake
In my opinion	On a trip	By accident
In a taxi	On a tour	By chance
In a car	On TV	By boat
In a helicopter	On the phone	By bus
In the classroom	On the internet	By plane
In the kitchen	On the radio	By rail
In the library	On the market	By sea
In a fog	On the whole	By train
In a hurry	On purpose	By coach
In a jam	On the train	By bike
In a play	On foot	By air

**Governing the Ungovernable**

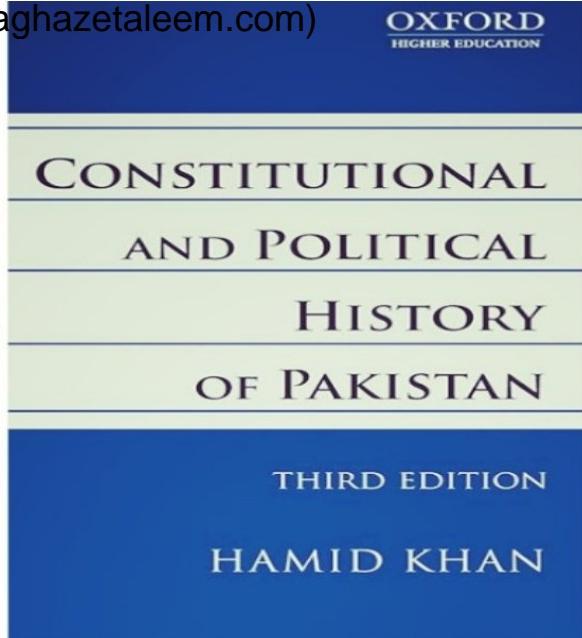
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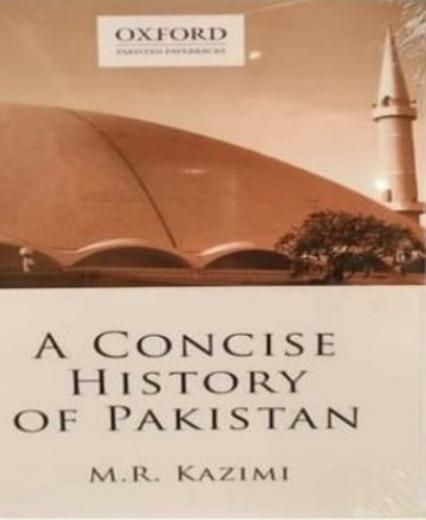
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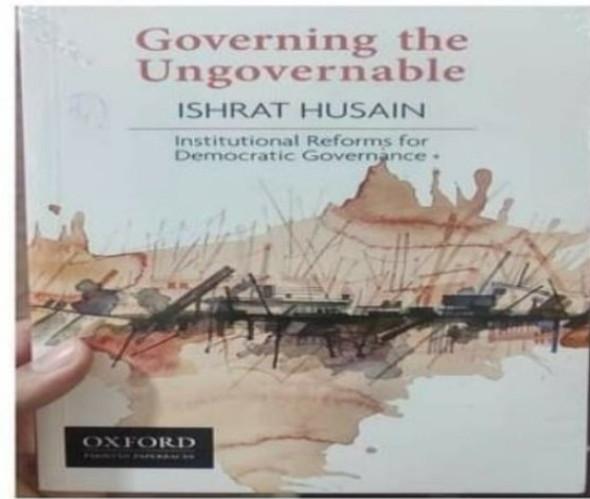
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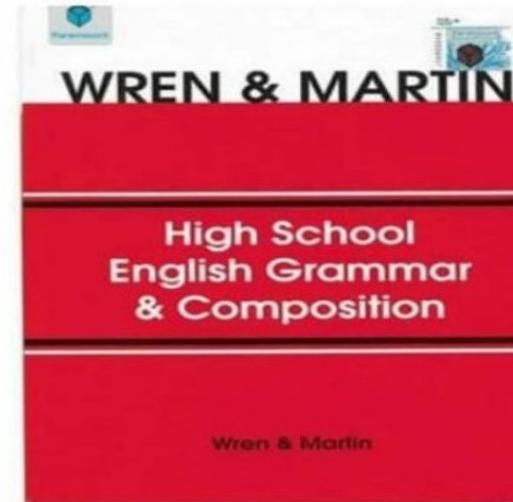
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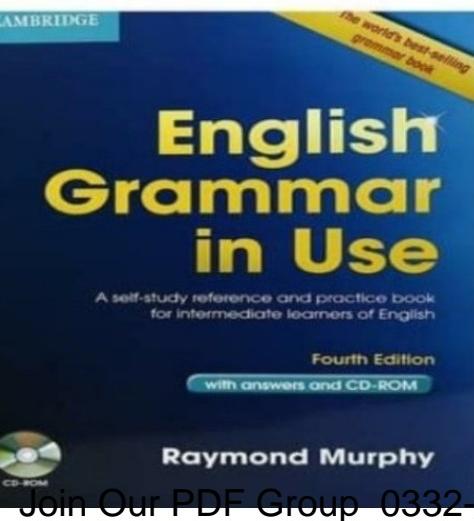
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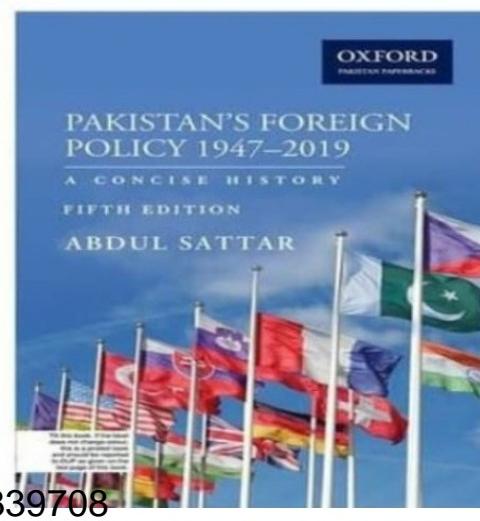
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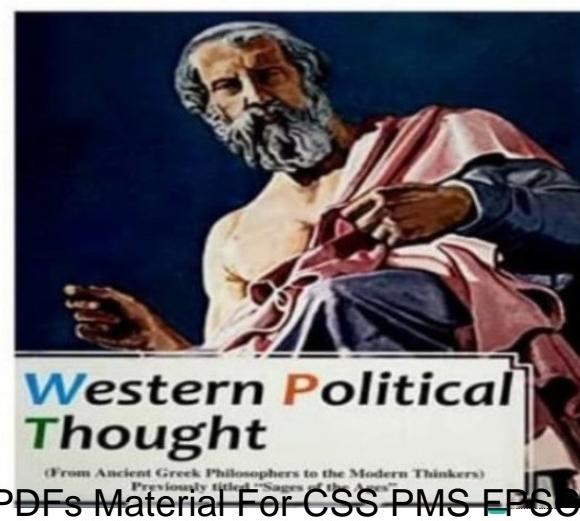
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# TRICKY Vocabulary

*With  meaning / Synonyms & Antonyms, usage and recent Examples from National Newspapers*



uses detected  
Vocabulary  
MCQs based on The DAWN Editorial

Sohail Shahzad Bhatti

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# IDIOMS & PHRASES

For Competitive Examinations



Meanings & Notes  
Example Sentences  
Most used Idioms & Phrases  
in CSS/PCS/PMS/NTS  
CSS/PCS/Past Papers  
Idioms & Phrases  
Solved MCQs  
1990-2021

Sohail Shahzad Bhatti

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**GK CORNER**

with the watchdog and reverse its recent barring of inspectors.

**June 06:** Spain became the first European country to ask a United Nations court for permission to join South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza.

**June 06:** Two senior British judges resigned from Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal.

**June 06:** One of Ukraine's most celebrated writers and poets, Sergiy Zhadan, joined the military.

**June 06:** The UN General Assembly elected Somalia, Panama, Greece and Denmark as non-permanent members for the next two-year term.

**June 07:** US President Joe Biden relaxed some restrictions on Ukraine's use of US weaponry inside Russia.

**June 07:** As many as 24 Muslim contestants could make it to India's Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament, in the 2024 general elections, against 26 in 2019.

**June 07:** UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres added Israel's military to a global list of offenders for committing violations against children in 2023.

**June 08:** Poland's Iga Swiatek extended her French Open reign as she thrashed Jasmine Paolini to win her third successive Roland Garros title.

**June 08:** William Anders, the former US astronaut who took

the historic 'Earthrise' photo from space over 55 years ago, died in a plane crash.

**June 08:** Italy became the first heavyweight nation to cast votes for the EU's next parliament.

**June 09:** Narendra Modi was sworn in as India's prime minister for a record-equalling third term.

**June 09:** French President Emmanuel Macron announced to dissolve parliament and called snap legislative elections after the far-right trounced his centrist alliance in EU polls.

**June 09:** Over two dozen countries signed a wishful "Declaration of Peace with the Ocean" in Costa Rica.

**June 09:** Benny Gantz, a former Israeli general and defence minister in Israel's war cabinet, resigned.

**June 10:** The UN Security Council adopted a US-drafted resolution backing a proposal outlined by President Joe Biden for a ceasefire in Gaza.

**June 10:** Max Verstappen completed a hat-trick of victories at the Canadian Grand Prix to consolidate his early-season lead in the drivers' championship.

**June 10:** Malawi's Vice President, Saulos Chilima, was killed in a plane crash.

**June 11:** Hunter Biden, the eldest living son of the US president, was found guilty on all three felony counts he faced relating to buying a handgun while being a user of

**GK Tidbits**

1. The current Federal Ombudsman is: **Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi**

2. The Chrysanthemum Throne symbolizes the monarchy of: **Japan**

3. Ashgabat is the capital of: **Turkmenistan**

4. The Punjab Tenancy Act was implemented in: **1887**

5. The Chaman border crossing with Afghanistan is also known as: **Bab-i-Dosti**

6. India carried out its first underground nuclear explosion on: **May 18, 1974**

7. Ebrahim Raisi was the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran since: **June 2021**

8. The capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is: **Kinshasa**

9. International Tea Day is celebrated on: **May 21**

10. The UN maritime court, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), is based in: **Hamburg (Germany)**

11. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat unilaterally proclaimed an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital on: **November 15, 1988**

12. The first country to officially

recognize an independent Palestinian state was: **Algeria**

13. The International Day of UN Peacekeepers is observed on: **May 29**

14. The world's only two countries where divorces are not permitted are Vatican City and: **Philippines**

15. The Arab League, officially known as the League of Arab States, was formed on: **March 22, 1945**

16. World Thyroid Day is observed on: **May 25th**

17. The tree whose pulpwood is used for the production of paper is: **Eucalyptus**

18. The highest mountain on Venus is: **Maxwell Montes**

19. The planet which is often referred to as the "Morning Star" and "Evening Star" is: **Venus**

20. The city in Sindh that is renowned as the birthplace of Emperor Akbar is: **Umerkot**

21. The Antarctic Treaty, which effectively designated Antarctica as a "no man's land", was signed on: **Dec. 1, 1959**

22. Scarborough Shoal area has been a focal point of maritime tensions between China and:

**Philippines**

23. The number of BIMSTEC countries is: **Seven**

24. N'Djamena is the capital of: **Chad**

25. The change in wind speed, wind direction or both, over a certain distance in the atmosphere, is called: **Wind Shear**

26. Cyclones typically form over warm ocean waters where the sea surface temperature is at least: **26.5°C**

27. PML-N was founded in: **1993**

28. The only female athlete in Pakistan to receive the Sitara-e-Imtiaz is: **Naila Kayani**

29. The number of secretaries general of the Tehran-based ECO from Pakistan is: **Three**

30. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq was established in: **2003**

31. Bhopal State was taken over as a Chief Commissioner's Province of the Indian Union on: **June 1, 1949**

32. Allama Iqbal's first collection of Urdu poetry was: **Baang-i-Dara (1924)**

33. Two teachers who influenced Allama Iqbal most were Syed Mir Hasan and: **Thomas Arnold**

## GK CORNER

crack cocaine.

**June 11:** Women refugees adopting the EU's principle of gender equality can be considered deserving of asylum status, the European Court of Justice ruled.

**June 11:** World record-holder Kaylee McKeown recorded the second-fastest swim of all time in 100m backstroke.

**June 12:** The United States announced a raft of new sanctions aimed at constraining Moscow's war in Ukraine while raising the stakes for foreign banks that still deal with Russia.

**June 12:** Ariane Titmus shattered fellow Australian Mollie O' Callaghan's 200m freestyle world record, touching in 1 min 52.23 secs.

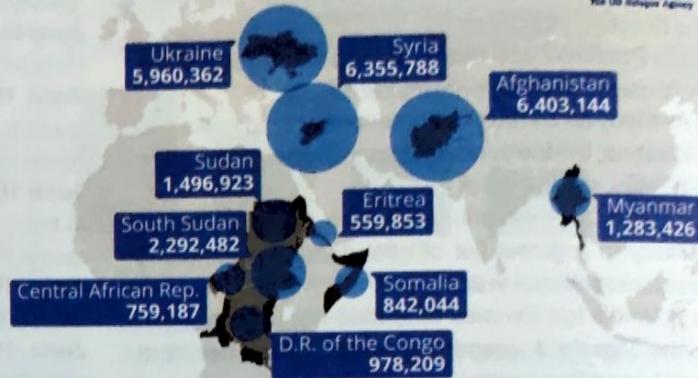
**June 13:** Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) major democracies agreed on an outline deal to provide \$50 billion of loans for Ukraine using interest from Russian sovereign assets frozen after Moscow launched its invasion of its neighbour in 2022.

**June 13:** Presidents Joe Biden and Volodymyr Zelensky signed a landmark US-Ukraine security deal.

**June 13:** The United Nations' refugee agency, UNHCR, reported that a staggering total of 120 million people are living forcibly displaced by

## Mapping The World's Refugee Population

Top 10 origin countries of refugees under UNHCR's mandate as of 2023



### GK Tidbits

34. Allama Iqbal was awarded a doctorate from Munich's university on his dissertation titled The Development of Metaphysics in Persia in: **1907**

35. The Preaching of Islam – A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faiths was written by: **Thomas Arnold**

36. Baku is the capital of: **Azerbaijan**

37. The Indonesian island, which is also known as the Island of the gods, is: **Bali**

38. The headquarters of the Gulf Cooperation Council is in: **Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

39. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was established in: **1972**

40. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was established in: **1994**

41. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in: **1964**

42. The liquid that is primarily used as food preservative is: **Liquid nitrogen**

43. UN-Habitat maintains its headquarters at: **Nairobi, Kenya**

44. The chairman of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan is: **Chief Justice of Pakistan**

45. Nearly 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons is held by the United States and: **Russia**

46. With a population of around 183 million, the largest minority in India are: **Muslims**

47. The number of seats in Lok Sabha, the lower house of India's parliament, is: **543**

48. Wisden's Almanack, the unquestionable authoritative book of the cricketing world, started publishing in: **1864**

49. The oldest and longest-inhabited city in the world is: **Damascus**

50. Syed Ameen-ul-Husaini was the grand Mufti of: **Palestine**

51. The world's highest and Asia's longest Heaven's Way Zip Line is located in: **Kaghan Valley**

52. To date, the longest-serving prime minister of India is: **Jawaharlal Nehru**

53. The current president of India is: **Droupadi Murmu**

54. The number of the standing committees in the Senate of Pakistan is: **42**

55. The fourth planet from the Sun is: **Mars**

56. The planet that is often referred to as the "Red Planet" is: **Mars**

57. The Ghulam Khan border point separates Pakistan from: **Afghanistan**

58. Pakistan's first postage stamp depicting a human face was released in: **1965**

59. The university at which Skull and Bones, Scroll and Key, and Wolf's Head are three of the most famous secret societies is: **Yale University**

60. Viktor Orban is the Prime Minister of: **Hungary**

61. World Environment Day is observed every year on: **June 5**

62. The first country to become carbon negative is: **Bhutan**

63. The Dargai Hydel Power Station was constructed in: **1952**

64. The constitutional amendment under which the Judicial Commission of Pakistan was constituted to appoint judges in the superior judiciary was: **18th Amendment**

65. As per the Constitution, the actual strength of judges of the Supreme Court is: **17**

66. The G7 brings together Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the United States and: **Italy**

67. The largest volcano and highest known peak in the Solar System is: **Olympus Mons (22 km high)**

war, violence and persecution.

**June 13:** Turkiye and the United States signed a contract for the sale of F-16 warplanes.

**June 13:** The EU's top court fined Hungary 200 million euros

(\$216 million) and imposed a daily one-million-euro penalty for failing to follow the bloc's asylum laws and illegally deporting migrants.

**June 13:** Kaylee McKeown swam the second-fastest 200m backstroke of all-time.

**June 14:** Pope Francis became the first pontiff to address the G7 grouping.

**June 15:** Iran and Sweden announced a prisoner exchange that saw a former Iranian official released in Sweden in exchange for an EU diplomat and a second Swede.

**June 15:** The Philippines filed a claim with the UN to an extended continental shelf in the South China Sea.

**June 15:** Sheikh Maher Al-Muaqly, the imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, delivered the Hajj 2024 sermon.

**June 15:** A total of 14 Russian and 11 Belarusian athletes were included by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on an initial list of "Individual Neutral Athletes" (AINs) eligible to compete in the Paris Games.

## The World's Most Competitive Economies

Overall scores in the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking 2024



### GK Tidbits

68. Crete is the largest island of: **Greece**

69. The third most significant greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide and methane is: **Nitrous oxide**

70. The 'International Year of Quantum Science and Technology' will be celebrated in: **2025**

71. German physicist who is known for laying the foundation for quantum mechanics is: **Werner Heisenberg**

72. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted in: **1992**

73. The 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the UNFCCC will be held in: **Brazil**

74. The World Day Against Child Labour is observed on: **June 12**

75. The highest astronomical observatory in the world is: **Tokyo Atacama Observatory (altitude: 18,500 feet)**

76. The World Telecommunication and Information Society Day is observed on: **17th May**

77. On 17th May 1865, the first International Telegraph Convention was signed in: **Paris**

78. The branch of medicine that is concerned with the study and treatment of tumors is: **Oncology**

79. The world's first country that has lost all its glaciers due to climate change is: **Venezuela**

80. The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated on: **22 May**

81. The initial text of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) was adopted on: **22 May 1992**

82. Biodiversity as a concept was first coined by: **Walter G. Rosen**

83. The years of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity were: **2011-2020**

84. Stonehenge is a prehistoric megalithic structure in: **England**

85. Sickle cell anemia is a hereditary disorder of: **Blood**

86. High-altitude clouds made up of ice crystals are called: **Cirrus clouds**

87. The Blue Planet Prize is an annual award recognizing significant scientific contributions to solving: **Environmental issues**

88. In the United States, Juneteenth commemorates the abolition of: **Slavery**

89. In the US history, the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863 by: **President Abraham Lincoln**

90. The "Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty" (START) was signed in: **2010**

91. Pluto was reclassified as a dwarf planet in: **2006**

92. About 75% of the Earth's freshwater reserves are held in: **Antarctica**

93. Pakistan's famous city that is also known as "The City of Flowers" is: **Peshawar**

94. The article of the UN Charter that grants the UNSC authority to ensure the enforcement of ICJ rulings is: **Article 94(2)**

95. The number of the Member States of the Colombo Process is: **12**

96. The world's southernmost and fifth largest continent is: **Antarctica**

97. The primary force that shapes planets, compelling them into a spherical form due to their massive size, is: **Gravity**

98. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) was established in: **2017**

99. The Sun's magnetic field is primarily generated within its outer layer, known as the: **Convection zone**

100. Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system was first deployed in: **2011**

## GK CORNER

## MCQs / NATIONAL

1. On May 17, \_\_\_\_\_ became Pakistan's first taekwondoka to win silver medal in the Asian Taekwondo Championship.

- (a) Shahzeb Khan (b) Sirbaz Khan  
(c) M. Waseem (d) Imdad Ali

2. On May 17, Pakistan defeated \_\_\_\_\_ to win the Central Asian Volleyball League.

- (a) Iran (b) Turkmenistan  
(c) Azerbaijan (d) Kazakhstan

3. On May 18, Pakistan's \_\_\_\_\_ became the leading wicket-taker in Women's T20 Internationals.

- (a) Nida Dar (b) Nahida Khan  
(c) Diana Baig (d) Sadia Iqbal

4. On May 19, Pakistan hosted an internationally recognized marathon, ONE RUN, in \_\_\_\_\_, for the first time.

- (a) Karachi (b) Lahore  
(c) Gujranwala (d) Islamabad

5. On \_\_\_\_\_, the Punjab Assembly passed the Defamation Bill, 2024.

- (a) May 20 (b) May 21  
(c) May 22 (d) May 23

6. On May 21, the National Commission on the Status of Women launched \_\_\_\_\_ phone app.

- (a) Sath Sath (b) Madadgar  
(c) Humqadam (d) Humsafar

7. On May 21, \_\_\_\_\_ became the second Pakistani climber to surmount Mount Everest without the use of artificial oxygen.

- (a) Sirbaz Khan (b) Hashim Khan  
(c) Shehzroze Kashif (d) Ali Nawaz

8. On May 22, PM Shehbaz Sharif allocated additional portfolio of Inter-Provincial Coordination to \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) Rana Sanaullah Khan  
(b) Rana Mashood Ahmad  
(c) Attaullah Tarar (d) Ali Pervez

9. On May 23, Pakistan and \_\_\_\_\_ agreed to strike a deal to sell the former's 15% shares in the Reko Diq project to the latter.

- (a) UAE (b) Qatar  
(c) Saudi Arabia (d) China

10. On May 24, noted Pakistani lady scholar Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper was appointed the new director of the prestigious Folger Shakespeare Library in \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) Oxford (b) Washington, DC  
(c) Cambridge (d) California

11. Veteran actor Talat Hussain passed away on \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) May 26 (b) May 27  
(c) May 28 (d) May 29

12. On May 29, the government enforced the Pakistan Essential Services (Maintenance) Act, 1952, for six months in \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) PIA (b) OGDCL  
(c) WAPDA (d) Utility Stores

13. On May 29, Pakistan and \_\_\_\_\_, a Caribbean Island country, formalized their diplomatic relations.

- (a) Saint Lucia (b) Cayman Islands  
(c) Dominica (d) Aruba

14. On May 29, the Federal Ministry of Education appointed Pakistan's renowned mountaineer \_\_\_\_\_ its goodwill ambassador for girls' education.

- (a) Samina Baig (b) Nadia Azad  
(c) Samia Khoja (d) Naila Kayani

15. On May 29, the federal government appointed \_\_\_\_\_ the Managing Director of the Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO).

- (a) Sarfraz Durrani (b) Asif Bashir  
(c) Waqar Shah (d) Hassan Nawaz

16. Established in 1973 PASSCO, which is headquartered in \_\_\_\_\_, commenced its operations in May 1974.

- (a) Lahore (b) Karachi  
(c) Faisalabad (d) Islamabad

17. Established on September 16, 1961, the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) is headquartered in \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) Quetta (b) Islamabad  
(c) Badin (d) Karachi

18. Suparco successfully launched Pakistan's Multi-Mission Communication Satellite, PakSat-MM1, on \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) May 28 (b) May 29  
(c) May 30 (d) May 31

19. On May 30, former foreign secretary \_\_\_\_\_ was nominated secretary general of the 10-member Economic Cooperation Organisation.

- (a) Aizaz Chaudhary  
(b) Dr Asad Majeed Khan  
(c) Jalil Abbas Jilani  
(d) Salman Bashir

20. On May 30, the \_\_\_\_\_ High Court restrained the intelligence agencies from conducting surveillance of citizens.

- (a) Lahore (b) Islamabad  
(c) Sindh (d) Balochistan

21. On June 01, Brig. Helen Mary

Roberts became the \_\_\_\_\_ female from Christian and a minority community to be promoted to Pakistan Army's rank of one-star officer.

- (a) First (b) Second  
(c) Third (d) Fourth

22. On June 03, Pakistan and \_\_\_\_\_ agreed to implement the mechanism of Temporary Admission Document to streamline and regulate the movement of cargo vehicles.

- (a) Iran (b) Russia  
(c) Afghanistan (d) Kazakhstan

23. On June 04, the federal government restored the current budget of the HEC for the financial year 2024-25 to \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) 60 billion (b) 65 billion  
(c) 70 billion (d) 75 billion

24. On June 04, Pakistan and \_\_\_\_\_, an island country in the eastern Caribbean, established formal diplomatic relations.

- (a) Saint Lucia (b) Saint Vincent  
(c) Barbados (d) Guyana

25. On \_\_\_\_\_, Pakistan Football League, the first-ever franchise-based league in Pakistan's football history, was officially launched.

- (a) June 04 (b) June 05  
(c) June 07 (d) June 08

26. On June 06, Pakistan secured 182 votes to become a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the \_\_\_\_\_ time.

- (a) 5th (b) 6th  
(c) 8th (d) 10th

27. On June 07, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan recommended elevation of chief justices of the Lahore and \_\_\_\_\_ High Courts to the Supreme Court.

- (a) Sindh (b) Balochistan  
(c) Peshawar (d) Islamabad



## GK CORNER

28. On June 07, Pakistan and China signed \_\_\_\_\_ MOUs and agreements to deepen bilateral cooperation in diverse areas.  
 (a) 15 (b) 20  
 (c) 22 (d) 23

29. The number of the members of the current National Economic Council is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) 13 (b) 14  
 (c) 17 (d) 18

30. On June 07, Pakistan and \_\_\_\_\_ signed an MoU on cooperation in Railway sector.

(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Russia  
 (c) China (d) Turkiye

31. On June 08, an Oxford University student from Balochistan, \_\_\_\_\_, won the Oxford Union Presidency, making history as the third Pakistani and the first person from Balochistan to achieve this honour.

(a) Akhter Kasi (b) Hamid Shakil  
 (c) Israr Kakar (d) Ali Baba Taj

32. The National Economic Council approved the 13th Five-year Development Plan on \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) June 07 (b) June 08  
 (c) June 09 (d) June 10

33. On June 10, Pakistan men's volleyball team lost to \_\_\_\_\_ in the final of the AVC Challenge Cup.

(a) Iran (b) Azerbaijan  
 (c) Saudi Arabia (d) Qatar

34. On June 11, the World Bank approved \$1 billion in the second round of additional financing to fund the \_\_\_\_\_ Hydropower Project.

(a) Damer Basha (b) Bunji  
 (c) Dasu (d) Thakot

35. The GDP growth rate in FY 2023-24 was recorded at \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) 2.38% (b) 2.48%  
 (c) 2.58% (d) 2.68%

36. On June 11, \_\_\_\_\_ was appointed the chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

(a) Farrukh H. Khan  
 (b) Adnan Asad  
 (c) Dr Shamshad Akhtar  
 (d) Nihal Cassim

37. The outlay of the federal budget for FY 2024-25 is \_\_\_\_\_ trillion.

(a) PKR 15.8776 (b) PKR 16.8776  
 (c) PKR 17.8776 (d) PKR 18.8776

38. On June 13, Mumtaz Ali Shah took oath of the office of Federal \_\_\_\_\_

(a) Women (b) Tax  
 (c) Banking (d) Insurance

39. On June 15, the World Bank approved \$150 million to improve access to and delivery of quality education services in \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Balochistan (b) Sindh  
 (c) KP (d) Punjab

40. On June 15, the naval forces of Pakistan and \_\_\_\_\_ held Turgutreis-9 exercise in the Eastern Mediterranean.  
 (a) Qatar (b) Turkiye  
 (c) China (d) Greece

## INTERNATIONAL

1. On May 16, \_\_\_\_\_ imposed first-ever sanctions on "extremist" Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

(a) Canada (b) USA  
 (c) EU (d) UK

2. On May 17, Noted Pakistani-American Dr Asif Mahmood was appointed a new commissioner of the US Commission on International Freedom.

(a) Press (b) Religious  
 (c) Civic (d) None of these

3. On May 17, \_\_\_\_\_ held its first fashion show featuring swimsuit models.

(a) UAE (b) Qatar  
 (c) Saudi Arabia (d) None of these

4. On May 17, the WHO released updated Bacterial Priority Pathogens List 2024, featuring \_\_\_\_\_ families of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

(a) 10 (b) 12  
 (c) 14 (d) 15

5. On \_\_\_\_\_, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his foreign minister were killed in a helicopter crash in Iran's northwest.

(a) May 16 (b) May 17  
 (c) May 18 (d) May 19

6. On May 19, Elon Musk launched his Starlink service on \_\_\_\_\_ resort island of Bali.

(a) Malaysia's (b) Thailand's  
 (c) Indonesia's (d) Philippines'

7. On May 19, US troops began withdrawing from the military-led state of \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) Niger (b) Nigeria  
 (c) Ethiopia (d) Chad

8. On May 19, \_\_\_\_\_ created English football history by winning their fourth straight Premier League title.  
 (a) Chelsea (b) Manchester City

## RISING ANTI-MUSLIM HATRED IN THE US

8,061 anti-Muslim incidents reported in 2023

→ Almost half the incidents reportedly occurred following start of Israel's onslaught on Palestine's Gaza

Anti-Muslim hate crimes in the US

241

308

177

607

2020

2021

2022

2023

(c) Arsenal (d) Liverpool

9. On May 22, the Asian Kabaddi Federation imposed a ban on the \_\_\_\_\_ federation and its national team's international participation.

(a) Indian (b) Pakistani  
 (c) Chinese (d) Iranian

10. On May 22, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that the next general election in the United Kingdom would be held on \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) July 3 (b) July 4  
 (c) July 5 (d) July 6

11. Jenny Erpenbeck and Michael Hofmann have won the 2024 International Booker Prize for the novel \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) In Ascension (b) After Sappho  
 (c) Kairos (d) Old God's Time

12. On May 22, \_\_\_\_\_ parliament voted in public security minister To Lam as the country's new president.

(a) Mexico (b) Mozambique  
 (c) Cambodia (d) Vietnam's

13. On May 23, President Putin signed a decree allowing the confiscation of assets inside Russia belonging to the \_\_\_\_\_, its citizens and companies.

(a) United States (b) Germany  
 (c) France (d) EU

14. On May 23, the UN General Assembly voted to establish July 11 as International Day of Remembrance of the \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) Slave Trade Victims  
 (b) Srebrenica Genocide  
 (c) Victims of Terrorism  
 (d) Nakba

15. On May 26, \_\_\_\_\_ swore in President Azali Assoumani for his fourth term.

(a) Chad (b) The Comoros  
 (c) Somalia (d) Morocco

16. On May 28, Spain, Ireland and \_\_\_\_\_ formally recognized a Palestinian state.

## GK CORNER

- (a) Norway      (b) Denmark  
 (c) Sweden      (d) Scotland
17. On May 28, \_\_\_\_\_ broke the record for the most goals in a Saudi Pro League season.  
 (a) Lionel Messi    (b) Mo Salah  
 (c) Cristiano Ronaldo    (d) Neymar
18. On May 29, the world's first wooden satellite was built by \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Chinese      (b) Japanese  
 (c) American      (d) Italian
19. On May 30, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum was held in \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Shanghai      (c) Beijing  
 (b) Makkah      (d) Riyadh
20. On May 30, a \_\_\_\_\_ jury convicted Donald Trump on all charges in his hush money case – historic first criminal trial of a former US president.  
 (a) Florida      (b) New Jersey  
 (c) California      (d) New York
21. On \_\_\_\_\_, US President Joe Biden approved Ukraine using US weapons to strike targets inside Russia.  
 (a) May 28      (b) May 29  
 (c) May 30      (d) May 31
22. On May 31, the UN Security Council unanimously decided that the United Nations political mission in Iraq would leave the country at the end of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) 2024      (b) 2025  
 (c) 2026      (d) 2027
23. Nayib Bukele is the president of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Ecuador      (b) Chile  
 (c) El Salvador      (d) Mexico
24. On June 02, businesswoman Halla Tomasdottir was declared the winner of \_\_\_\_\_ presidential election.  
 (a) Iceland's      (b) Poland's  
 (c) Ecuador's      (d) El Salvador's
25. On June 03, Claudia Sheinbaum was elected \_\_\_\_\_ first woman president.  
 (a) Mexico's      (b) Vietnam's  
 (c) Ireland's      (d) Latvia's
26. Brigitte Bierlein was the first Chancellor of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Germany      (b) Austria  
 (c) Switzerland      (d) None of these
27. On June 05, \_\_\_\_\_ recognized the state of Palestine.  
 (a) Italy      (b) Slovenia  
 (c) Denmark      (d) Finland
28. On June 06, \_\_\_\_\_ became the first European country to ask the ICJ

for permission to join South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza.

- (a) Italy      (b) Iceland  
 (c) Spain      (d) Norway

29. In this year's general election in India, as many as \_\_\_\_\_ Muslim contestants have made it to Lok Sabha.

- (a) 20      (b) 22  
 (c) 24      (d) 26

30. On June 07, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres added \_\_\_\_\_ military to a global list of offenders for committing violations against children in 2023.

- (a) North Korea's      (b) Russia's  
 (c) Israel's      (d) Chad's

31. On \_\_\_\_\_, Narendra Modi was sworn in as India's prime minister for a record-equalling third term.

- (a) June 9      (b) June 10  
 (c) June 11      (d) June 12

32. On June 09, Benny Gantz, a former Israeli general and \_\_\_\_\_ minister in Israel's war cabinet, resigned.

- (a) Security      (b) Defence  
 (c) War      (d) Foreign

33. On June 10, \_\_\_\_\_ Vice President Saulos Chilima was killed in a plane crash.

- (a) Malawi's      (b) South Africa's  
 (c) Armenia's      (d) Kenya's

34. On June 12, Ariarne Titmus of \_\_\_\_\_ broke 200m freestyle swimming world record, touching in 1 min 52.23 secs.

- (a) Norway      (b) Australia

- (c) Denmark      (d) New Zealand

35. On \_\_\_\_\_, Presidents Joe Biden and Volodymyr Zelensky signed a landmark US-Ukraine security deal.  
 (a) June 11      (b) June 12  
 (c) June 13      (d) June 14

36. On June 13, the UNHCR reported that around \_\_\_\_\_ million people are living forcibly displaced by war, violence and persecution.  
 (a) 80      (b) 100  
 (c) 120      (d) 150

37. On June 13, \_\_\_\_\_ and the United States signed a contract for the sale of F-16 warplanes.

- (a) India      (b) Ukraine  
 (c) Taiwan      (d) Turkiye

38. On June 13, the EU's top court fined \_\_\_\_\_ 200 million euros for failing to follow the bloc's asylum laws and illegally deporting migrants.  
 (a) Finland      (b) Poland  
 (c) Hungary      (d) Georgia

39. On June 15, \_\_\_\_\_ filed a claim with the UN to an extended continental shelf in the South China Sea.

- (a) Thailand      (b) The Philippines  
 (c) Taiwan      (d) Indonesia

40. On June 15, \_\_\_\_\_, the imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, delivered the Hajj 2024 sermon.

- (a) Abdul-Rahman Al-Sudais  
 (b) Sheikh Abdullah Awad Al-Juhany  
 (c) Sheikh Yasir bin Al-Dossary  
 (d) Sheikh Maher Al-Muaqly

## OCEAN WARMING

The ocean absorbs most of the excess heat due to global warming caused by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, leading to rising ocean temperatures

Increase in Ocean Temperature	Projected to Future Increase
1.2°C from 1950 to 2020	1.7°C to 3.8°C from 2020 to 2100

### Causes of Ocean Warming (due to Global Warming)

**GHG Emissions:** Fossil fuels burning releases CO<sub>2</sub> and GHG

**Deforestation:** Lesser trees → More CO<sub>2</sub> & GHG → Global Warming → Warming of Ocean

**Industrial Activities:** Emit various pollutants that contribute to greenhouse effect

**Agricultural Practices:** Produces methane and nitrous oxide – potent greenhouse gases

**Heat Absorption by Oceans:** Oceans absorb ~90% of excess heat generated by GHGs

### Impact of Ocean Warming

**Sea Level Rise:** Warmer water expands, causing sea levels to rise

**Coral Bleaching:** Corals expel the algae (zooxanthellae) living in their tissue and turn completely white

**Ocean Acidification:** Ocean absorbs ~1/4<sup>th</sup> of total CO<sub>2</sub>, thus making it more acidic (non-metallic oxides acidic in nature)

**Impacts on Marine Life:** Causes many marine species to shift towards the poles and disrupts food webs

**Impacts on Climate Patterns:** Influences atmospheric circulation patterns such as El Niño and La Niña & extreme weather events